

3 1761 03938 1702

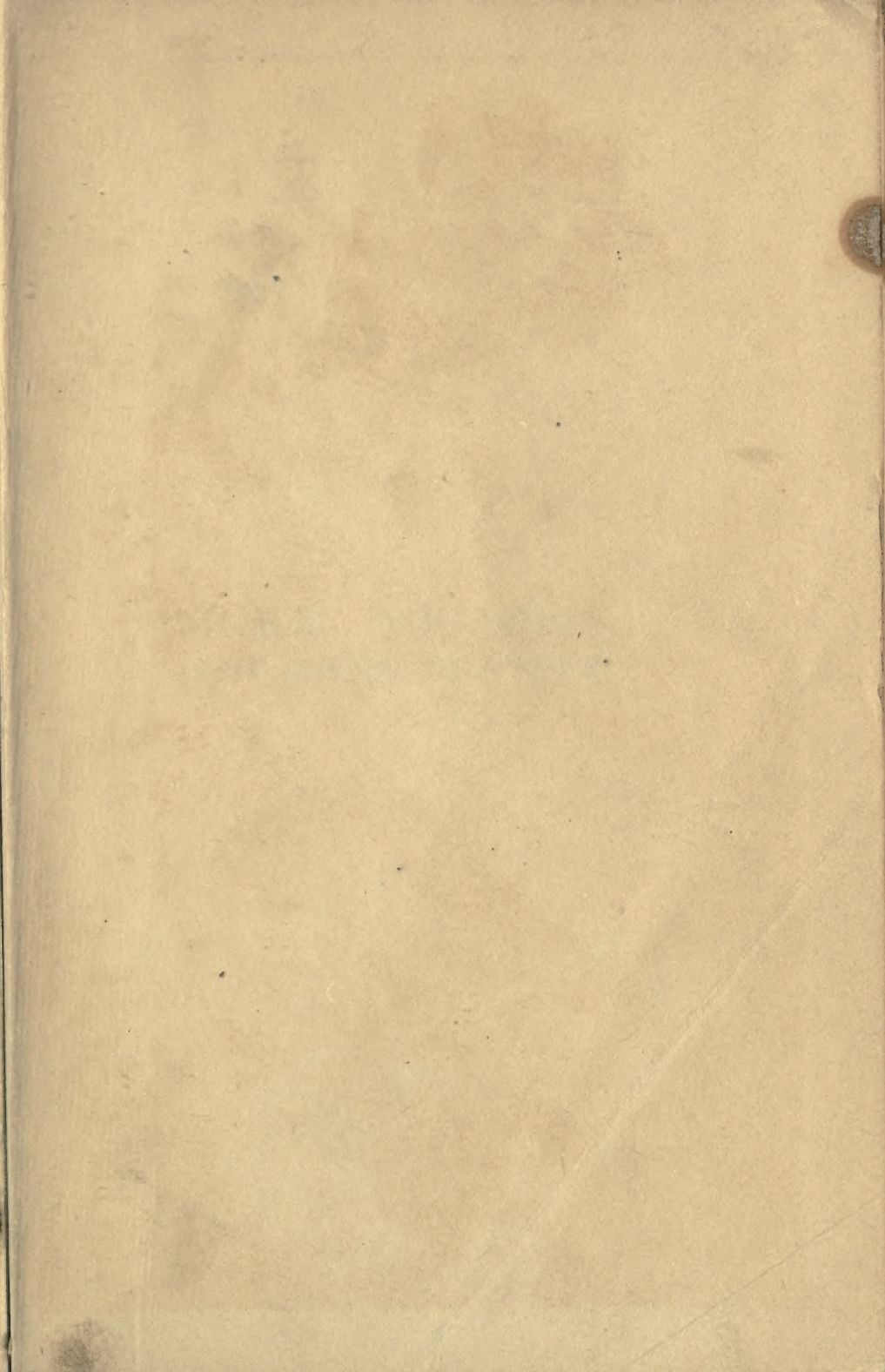


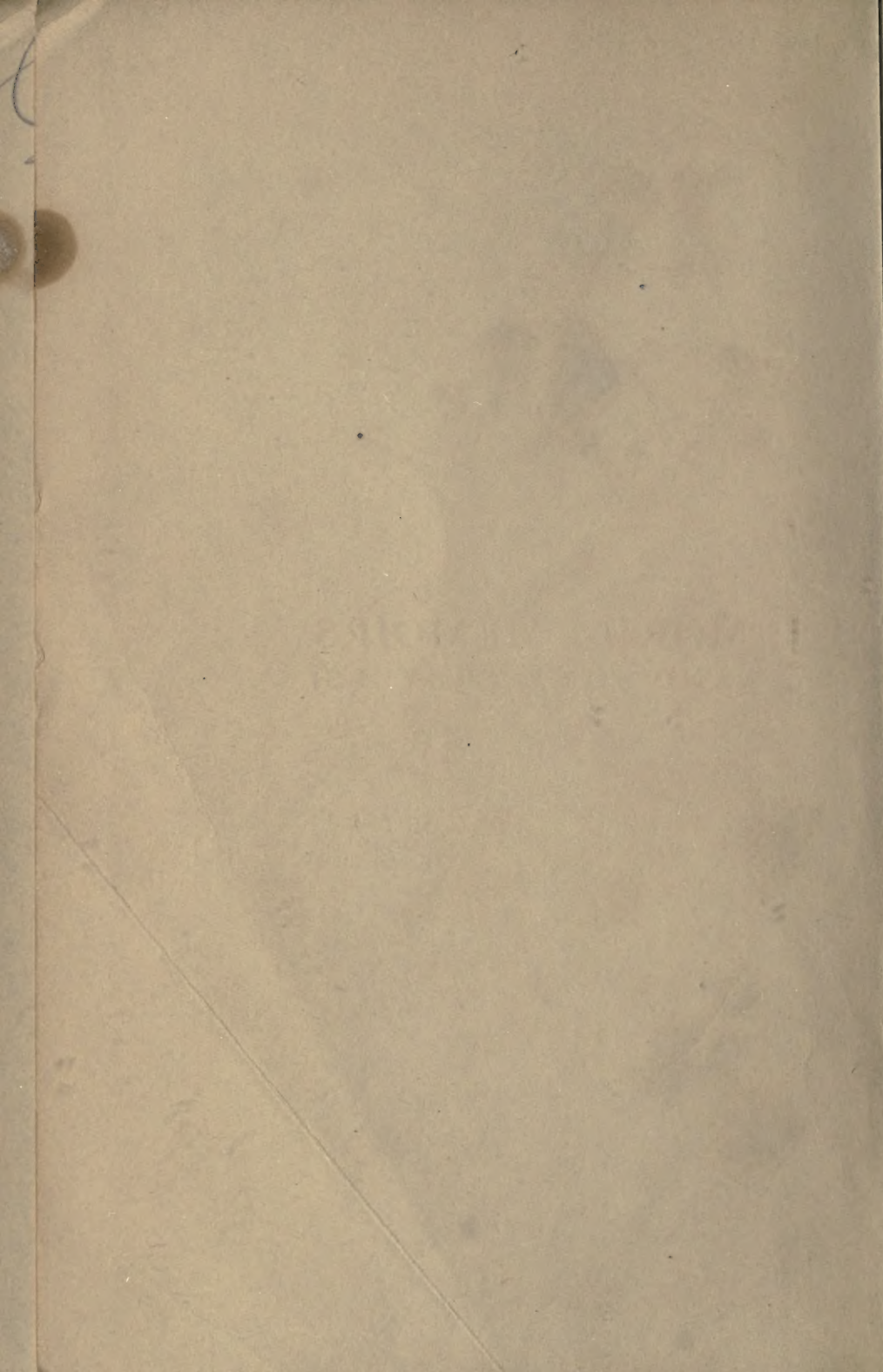
16/3/22

16/11

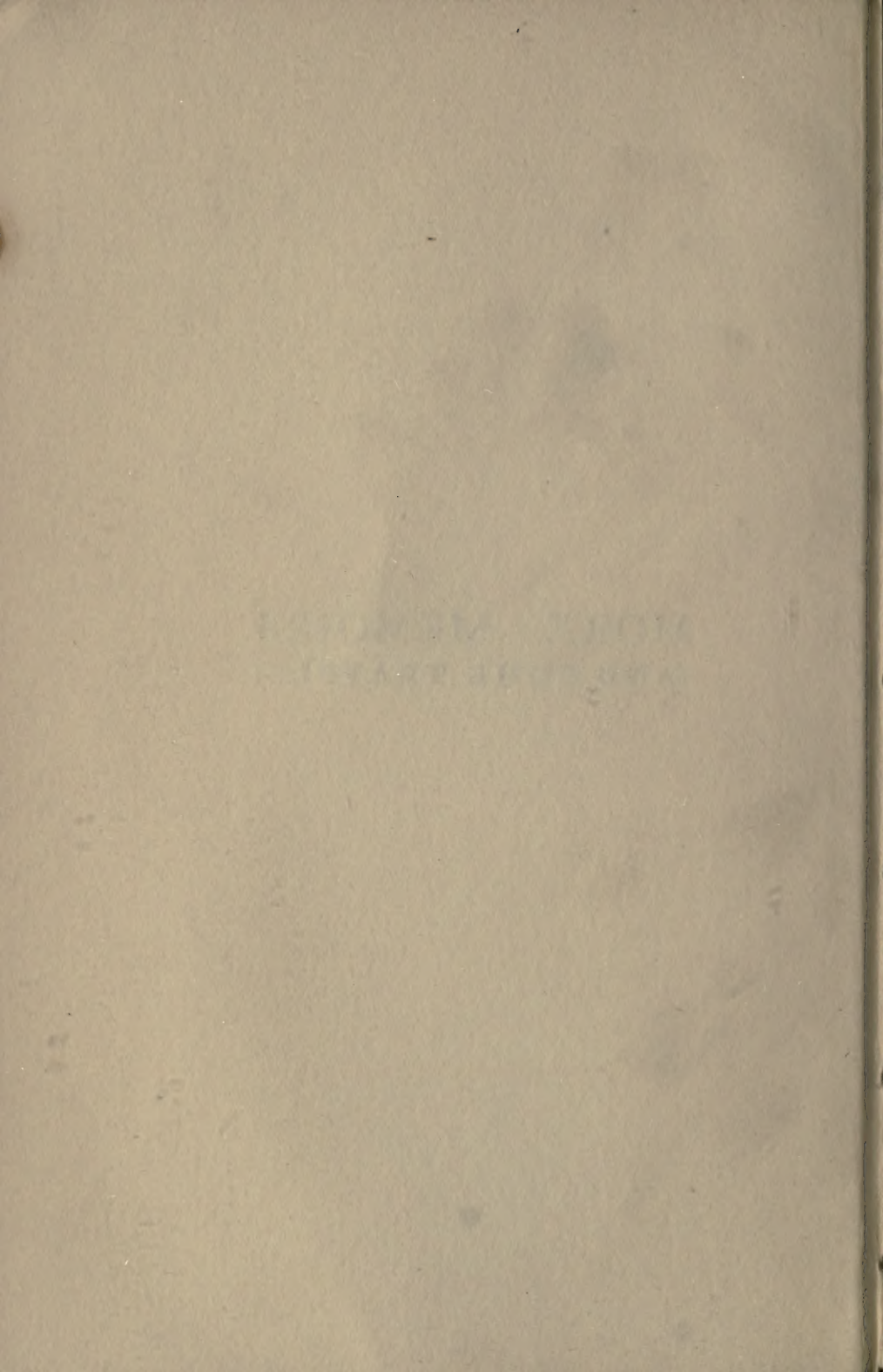
NOT FOR SALE

at Library if
by wanted.





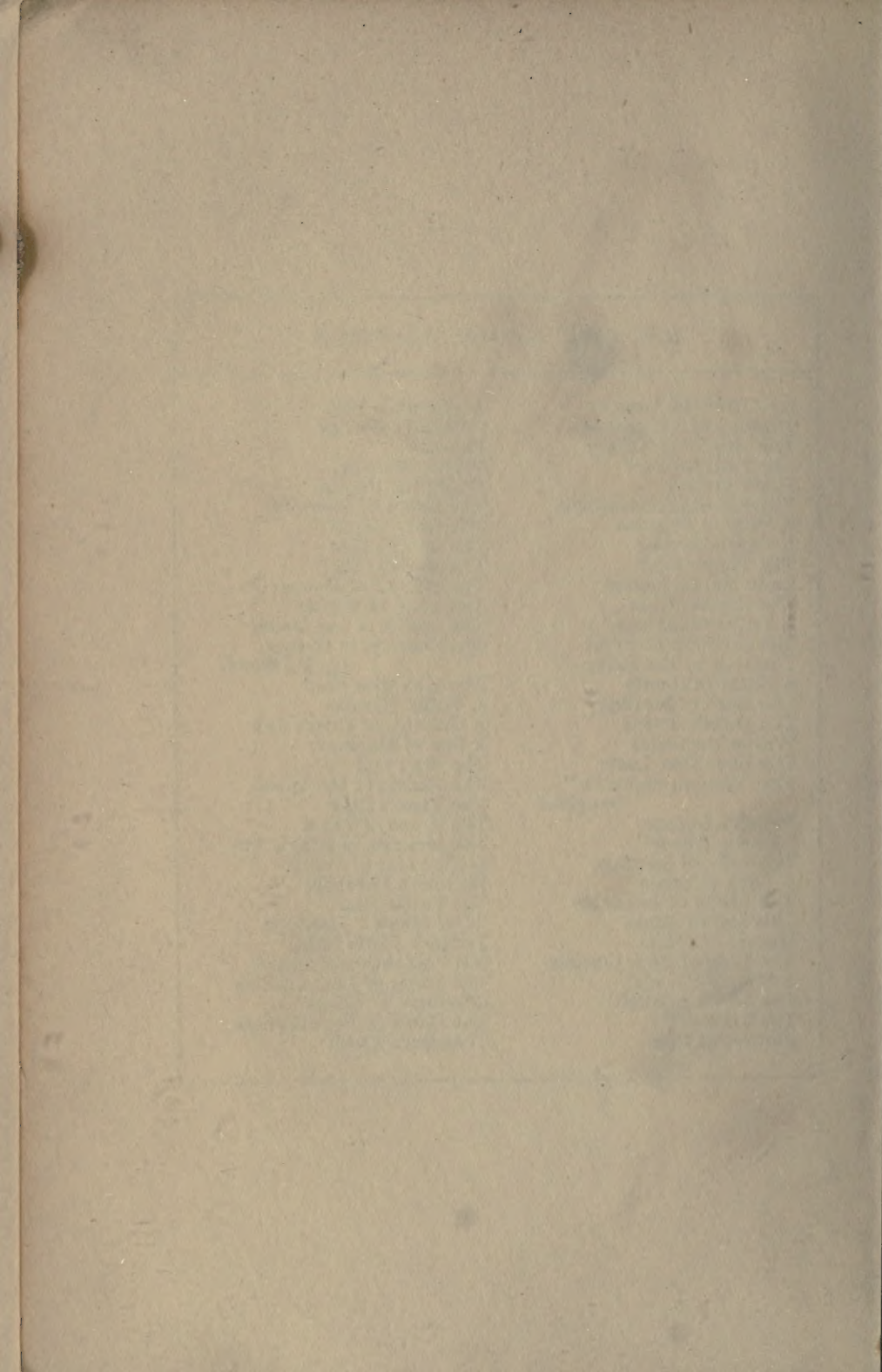
**MORE MEMOIRS
(AND SOME TRAVELS)**

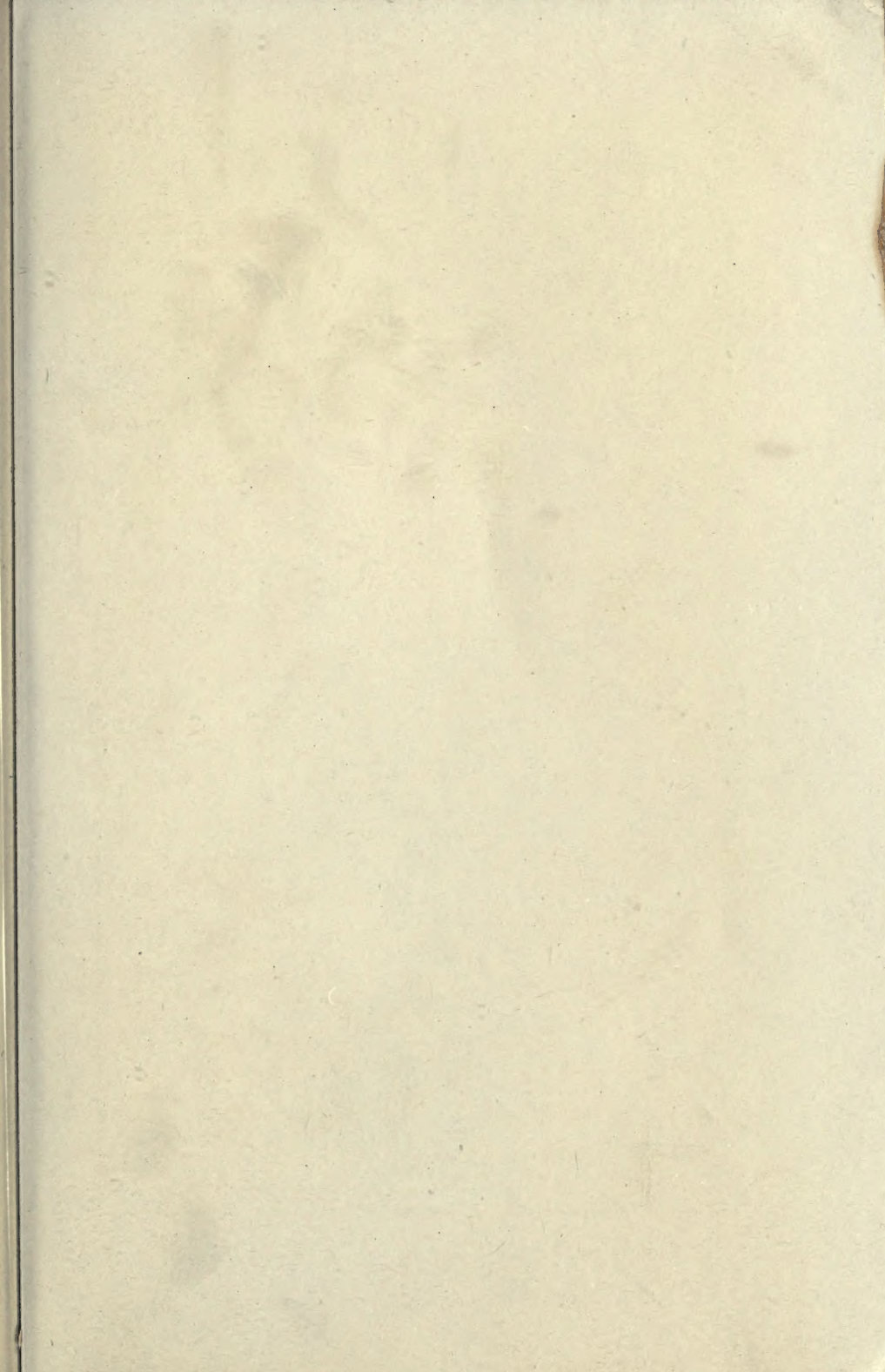


BY THE SAME AUTHOR

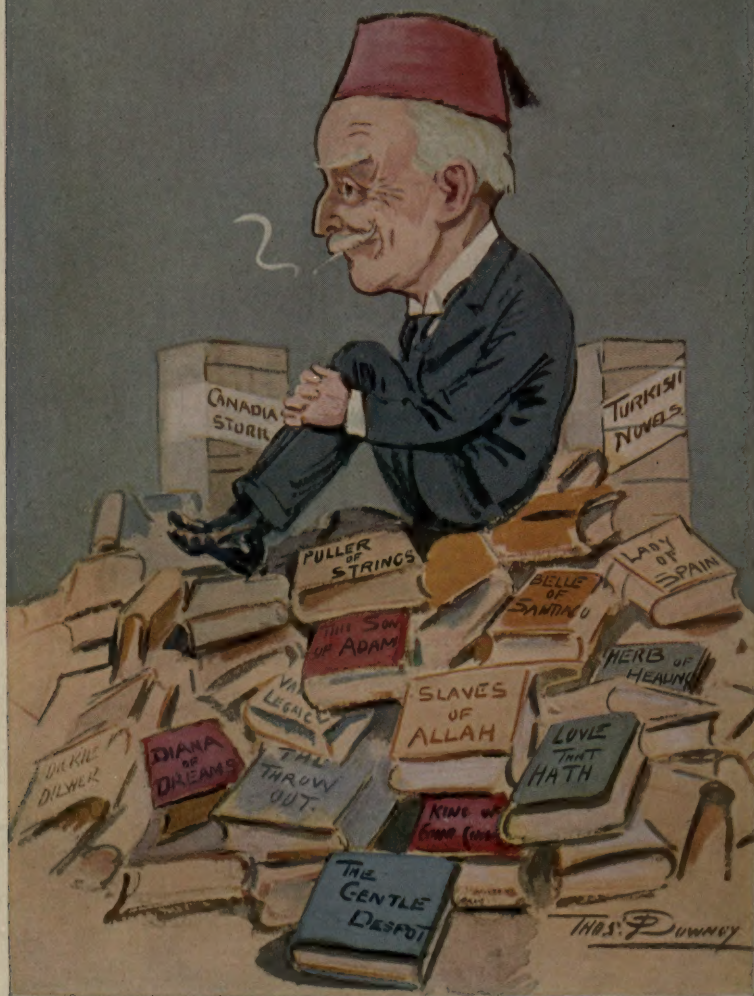
Love and the Locusts
 Memoirs of a Clubman
 The Man from Turkey
 The Faithful Fool
 Uncle Jeremy
 Pilgrims of Circumstance
 A Rubber Princess
 A Gentle Despot
 The Throw Back
 Lady Mary's Money
 The Greater Gain
 A Puller of Strings
 The Girl who Got Out
 The Hut by the River
 A Game of Hearts
 The Herb of Healing
 The Duke's Twins
 Within the Gates
 The Love that Lasts
 The "Second-Sighter's"
 Daughter
 Varick's Legacy
 "Dickie Dilver"
 The Belle of Santiago
 A Lady of Spain
 The Vision of Balmaine
 This Son of Adam
 Diana of Dreams
 The King of Four Corners
 A Simple Savage
 The Slaves of Allah
 The Trickster
 Flowers of Fire

A Woman's Way
 Galahad's Garden
 Fanuela
 Which Woman?
 Peggy the Pilgrim
 The Belles of Vaudroy
 The Only World
 The Devil's Due
 The Marble City
 The Hermit of Bonneville
 The Land of Silence
 The Ladies of the Manor
 The Shutters of Silence
 (39th Edition)
 The Man who Died
 A Wilful Woman
 A Goddess of Gray's Inn
 A Son of Mammon
 The Way Out
 The Person in the House
 The Tiger's Claw
 The Bread of Tears
 The Hermits of Gray's Inn
 Settled Out of Court
 Fortune's Footballs
 The Cattle Man
 "Old Man's" Marriage
 Tuxter's Little Maid
 His Lordship and Others
 The Judge of Four Corners
 Gascoigne's "Ghost"
 The Dance at Four Corners
 Tomalyn's Quest





G. B. BURGIN'S
WHOLE-
TIME
HOBBY.



The Author, "sitting" on himself. By THOMAS DOWNEY.

LE.
B9565
mo

MORE MEMOIRS (AND SOME TRAVELS)

By G. B. Burgin :: (Author of
"Memoirs of a Clubman," "The Shutters of Silence," etc.)



737965.
28.11.29.

LONDON: HUTCHINSON & CO.
PATERNOSTER ROW

1922



“MEMOIRS OF A CLUBMAN”

By G. B. BURGIN :: :: Hutchinson, 16s. net

The Times.—“Mr. Burgin is at the best of his delicacy and his humour in the picture he draws of the little Canadian village. . . . To this journey we owe the charming episode called ‘Four Corners.’”

The Times Supplement.—“There is not a malicious sting in the whole swarm of anecdotes let loose between the covers of these memoirs. . . . It is perhaps because of these early lessons that Mr. Burgin now speaks with such a pleasant modesty of his books.”

British Weekly (Sir W. Robertson Nicoll).—“Here we may leave Mr. Burgin and his very pleasant and entertaining book. Mr. Burgin’s great work perhaps is that he has done more than other men to promote the social life of literary London. For this and for his book he deserves much gratitude.”

The Sphere.—“Mr. Burgin’s volume of pleasant anecdote and kindly reflection is a valuable achievement.”

Truth.—“It is one of those admirable books which may be opened anywhere with the certainty of finding entertainment.”

The Spectator.—“The book is full of lively anecdotes. It is the record of a man who has produced a vast number of books of which the ideals are on the side of the angels.”

Daily Mail.—“It is a very fascinating volume.”

The Pall Mall Gazette.—“A most agreeable book, which should have many readers.”

The Westminster Gazette.—“From beginning to end of a big book he never ceases to be entertaining. It is one more feat on which he is to be congratulated.”

The Star.—“The book is a treasure-chest which will interest everyone who has ever read any one of Mr. Burgin’s sixty-one novels, and there are few people who have not.”

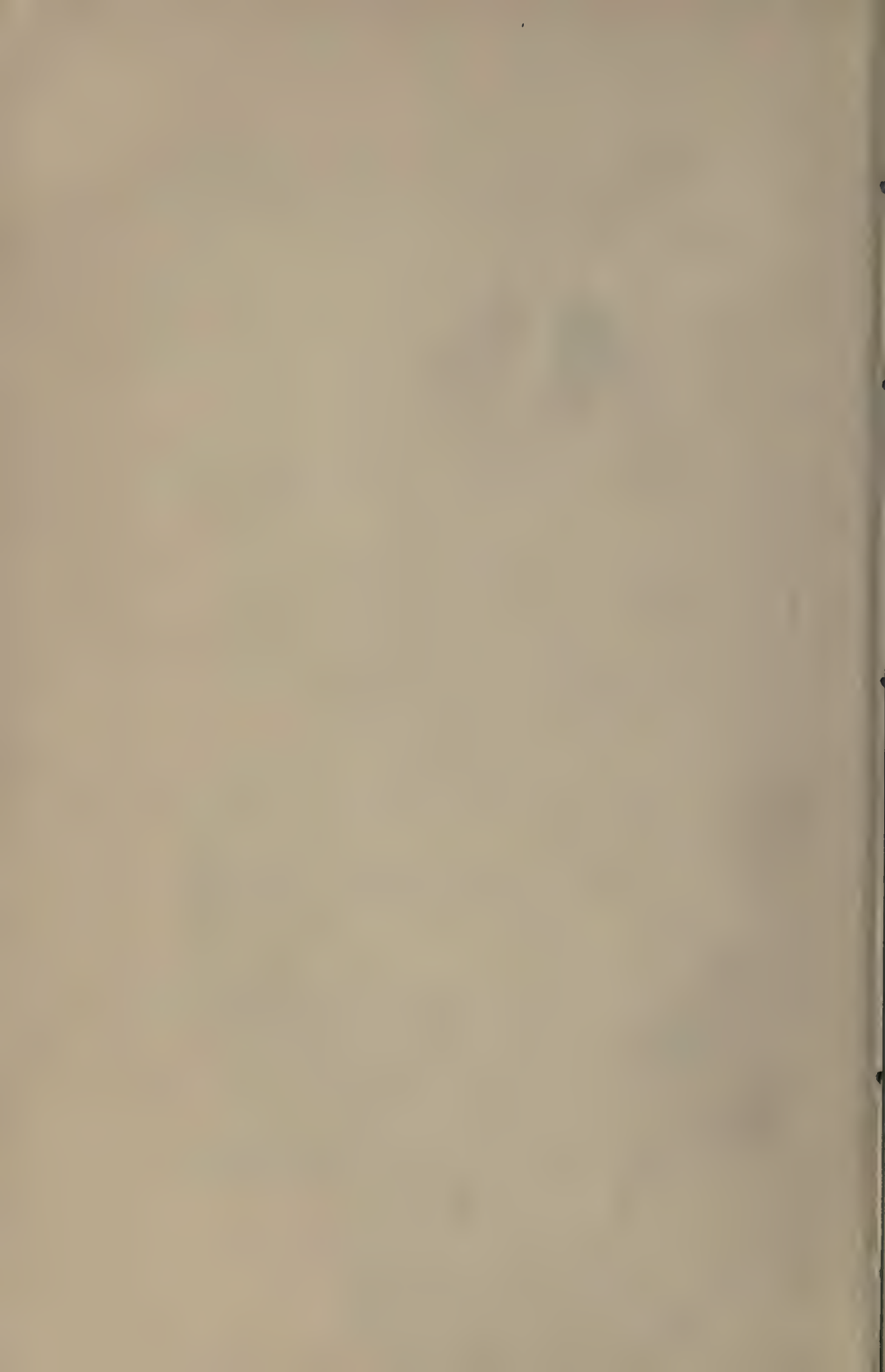
The Daily Graphic.—“It is a book which all who are interested in books will want to read.”

The Nottingham Guardian.—“It shows unmistakable signs of sincerity, the tracing of a discerning mind, and a character analysis which is unblemished, and therefore bright and refreshing.”

Sheffield Daily Telegraph.—“One of the most companionable books of the year. You may open it where you please.”

Irish Times.—“These memoirs are charming.”

The Illustrated London News.—“A book that reflects on every page its author’s geniality and his wide practice among men of letters.”



CONTENTS

PROLOGUE - - - - -	PAGE xi
--------------------	------------

PART I.

ENGLAND

CHAPTER		PAGE
I. MY EARLY POETIC STRUGGLES - - - - -		19
II. AT HOMES, AND OTHER THINGS - - - - -		27
III. VARIOUS KINDS OF AUTHORS - - - - -		42
IV. BOOKS OF OUR YOUTH - - - - -		54
V. SOME DISCONNECTED ANECDOTES - - - - -		74
VI. THE COMING OF KIPLING - - - - -		87
VII. THE USES OF FICTION - - - - -		93
VIII. YOUNG AUTHORS AND THE GREEN SLIPS - - - - -		102
IX. OLLA PODRIDA - - - - -		109
X. MINOR WANDERINGS - - - - -		123
XI. POPULARITY <i>versus</i> STYLE - - - - -		135
XII. SOME "NEW VAGABOND" STORIES - - - - -		143
XIII. REJECTED MANUSCRIPTS - - - - -		156
XIV. A FIRST BOOK - - - - -		164
XV. HOW WELL-KNOWN AUTHORS BEGAN TO WRITE - - - - -		169
XVI. SOME CLUBS—THEATRICAL AND OTHERWISE - - - - -		198

PART II.

CANADA

I. OFF TO FOUR CORNERS - - - - -	215
II. LOOKING ROUND FOUR CORNERS AGAIN - - - - -	231
III. CROSSING THE BRIDGE - - - - -	242
IV. AMONG THE HABITANTS - - - - -	247
V. CATCHING THE CARS - - - - -	252
VI. THE OLDEST INHABITANT - - - - -	259
VII. A PROFESSIONAL HOAX - - - - -	264
VIII. COMING BACK - - - - -	268

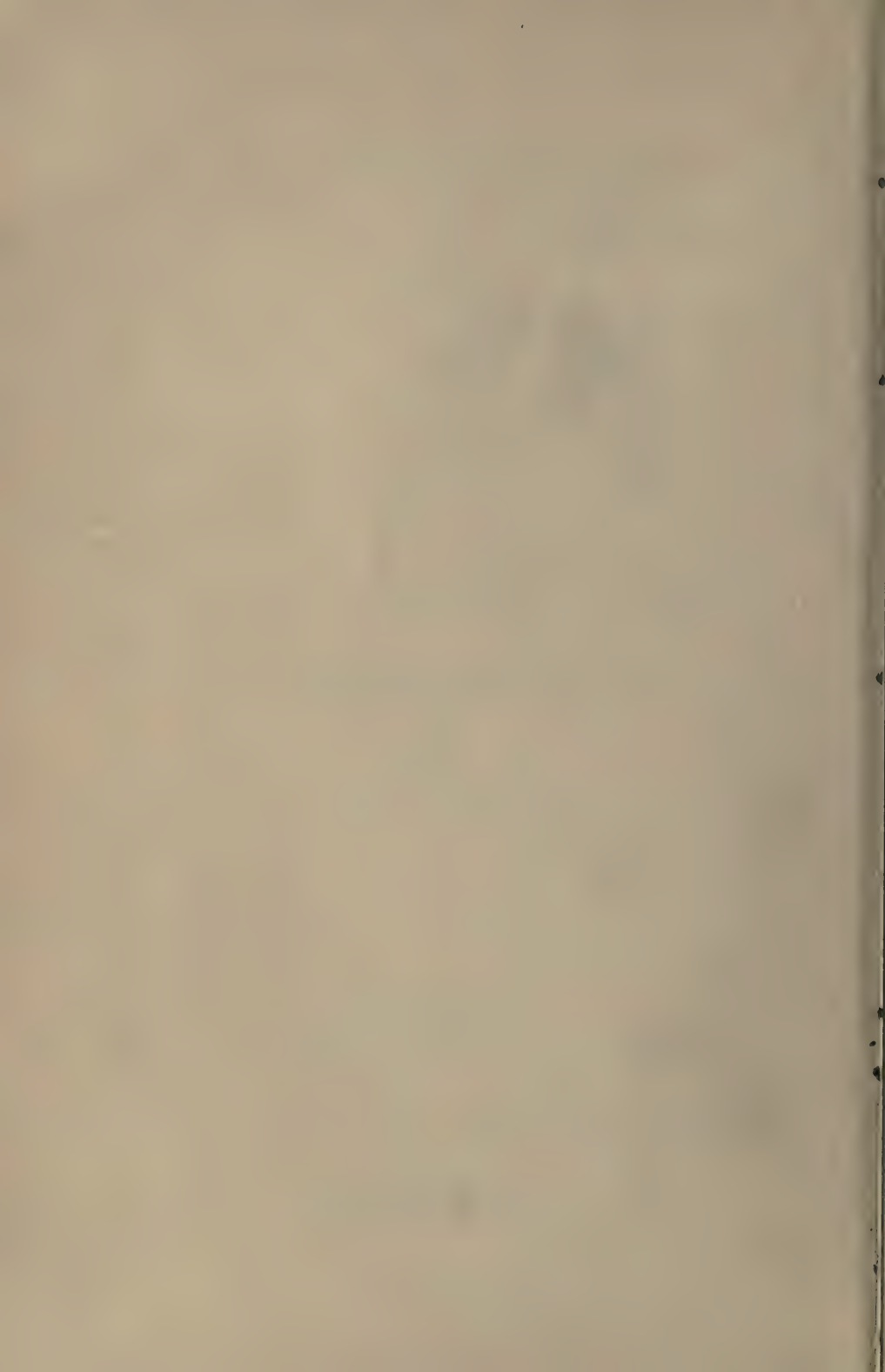
PART III.

TURKEY AND ASIA MINOR

I. ROUND THE FORTIFICATIONS - - - - -	271
II. IN PERA - - - - -	284
III. OFF TO ASIA MINOR - - - - -	295
IV. DOWN THE TIGRIS - - - - -	305
V. AT KHARFOOT - - - - -	316

PART IV.

IN HOLLAND AND BELGIUM



PROLOGUE

GENTLE READER, did you ever sit down in a moment of light-hearted gentleness and endeavour to instruct and amuse your alleged fellow-creatures? If you have not, and are inclined to do so, take my advice and refrain; that way lie many pitfalls spread by the wary for your unwary feet. The wary do not want to be instructed or amused. For my sins, I decided to write a book called "Memoirs of a Clubman"; at least, that is what the publisher's manager called it. In my childlike innocence, I headed these outpourings "The Making of a Novelist." When he saw this caption, the manager, as became such an autocrat, was harsh with me, and said: "A novelist of your experience ought to be aware that no one wants to know how a novelist is made; he isn't a ginger-beer bottle turned out in a factory. When the Almighty made novelists—if He ever did make them—it was in a fit of absent-mindedness, for, with all due deference to you and your fellow-authors, most novelists ought never to have been made at all. Everyone thinks, if he had the making of a novelist, he could put in so many improvements on him that he would not know himself." It appeared to me, however, that a novelist does not want to know himself. The critics have told him so often that he is not really a novelist, but only thinks he is, that self-enlightenment unpleasantly bewilders him. Then, as a concession to sentiment, I gave this literary despot the option of some twenty titles, ranging from the sublime to the insignificant. But he would have none of them. "What's to be done?" I asked in despair. "Better leave it to me," he said wearily. "In a moment of madness, I once decided to be a novelist myself, but my

good angel came to the rescue, and I changed my mind." So, with equal weariness, I left it to him.

The result of our joint labours was a nice fat book, with a fat portrait of myself looking as if I were

Sitting one day at the organ,
Weary and ill at ease.

Candour compels me to admit that the book weighed a good deal. When I mentioned its weight to so-called friends, they implied that it would appear equally heavy to my readers—if I ever had any. Smarting from what Arthur Roberts called their "sarcacisms," I turned up the Book of Job to find out whether his friends were worse than mine. They came out about equal. In case you have not read the Book of Job lately (it is a favourite study of mine when I get unappreciative Press notices), this is the kind, cordial, brotherly, helpful way in which Job's friends *comforted* him:—

"Should a wise man utter vain knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind? Should he reason with unprofitable talk, or with speeches wherewith he can do no good?"

My friends did not put it in exactly that way, but that is what they meant. Most of them are too polished to refer crudely to the portion of one's anatomy mentioned by Job's comforters; they prefer to call it "stomach." Which reminds me that when I was a small boy at school my friend Bailey got into trouble with the headmaster because he was equally refined. We were dealing with the primal curse, and Bailey's version of the text was: "Upon thy *stummick* shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." When asked for an explanation why he had tampered with the original in so unseemly a fashion, Bailey's excuse was that he did not think "belly" a polite word, so had substituted "stummick." Whereupon the headmaster gave him five hundred lines for not knowing how to spell.

A story is told of a Scotch clergyman who was greatly harassed by the critical comments of his friends, and in desperation thus addressed them from the pulpit: "You

think you'll get to Heaven by clinging to my coat tails, but I'll cheat you all. I'll be buried in a jacket."

My friends were the first of my tribulations. Then came some more.

I have many delightful acquaintances among the critics, and the week before the book appeared vainly endeavoured to dodge them, because I was apprehensive lest they should think that I wanted favourable notices. Of course, I wanted them to give me favourable notices. If you are not a novelist, you can have no idea how much friendly notices improve your appetite for breakfast—they generally come at breakfast time—and, until you get some unfriendly ones, for the next twenty-four hours make life one "grand sweet song." Should they prove to be hostile, they generally transform your day into one long, sad howl. Some authors say that they never read their Press notices. Heaven forgive them, for they lie in their teeth. Still, I wanted to keep out of the way of the critics lest they should misinterpret my nervous attempts to appear in full possession of my faculties when I met them. And three out of every five men in Fleet Street proved to be critics. Somehow, it seemed to me that there was sorrow as well as compassion in their greetings.

And so, in my anxiety to be, like Cæsar's wife, "all things to all men," I "put my foot in it" with a very big critic—he was big both mentally and physically. As I came along the Strand three soldiers were fighting with the police, who bundled them into taxis and took them off to Bow Street. When I turned the corner of Bedford Street four gilded-toed elephants solemnly marched toward me. A little further on the big critic affably hailed me from the door of "The Yorick," and, in the course of a desultory conversation, remarked that London was very dull. "Dull!" said I. "Why, London streets are always full of strange happenings. Five minutes ago I saw three soldiers having a row with the police; three minutes ago I met four gilt-toed elephants wandering along in the middle of the street; and now, here am I talking to a real live lion."

“ He smiled a kind of sickly smile and curled up ”—by the door.

Next, to encourage me in my efforts to go down to posterity as a man engaged in a constant struggle to earn his literary bread,* came the people whom I had left out of my weighty volume. I did not mean to leave them out, but grew tired of talking about myself, and hurried through the book to get away from so egotistical a subject. One man, however, quite unintentionally on his part, made me very happy by proving that he had read the book. “ I’ve read your book,” he said with scathing emphasis, “ and notice ” (here he produced a sheet of paper with the words carefully written down) “ you say in it:—

“ ‘ When I tell them I have generally found the smaller people nicer than the bigger ones, they reflect. Very well. Let’s have the smaller ones, too. No one ever thinks it worth while to write about the smaller ones.’ ”

“ Well? ” I said feebly. “ What of it? ”

“ As you have altogether omitted to mention me, it proves that you do not consider I belong to either the big or the little ones. I pity your bad taste. Good morning.” And now,

We do not speak as we pass by.

But all misfortunes have their compensations. Two other men were very nice about being left out, and never said a word. I repaired my omission to the best of my ability by writing to a paper which liked their work, and said that in my hurry I had thoughtlessly omitted to tell stories about them, so I enclosed the stories. The editor was grateful to me because he obtained a gratuitous column of “ yarns ” about two very well-known writers.

* From an unpublished letter of R. L. Stevenson to his friend, Charles Baxter: “ I find it damned hard work to keep up a good countenance in this world nowadays—harder than anyone knows.” This is even more vigorous than a letter of Swinburne’s: “ Mr. Swinburne begs to inform Mr. — (whose name is unknown to him) that he did receive the number of ‘ The —,’ and is happy to learn that the lines inscribed to him which appeared in it will not reappear under that inscription.”

Then came the photographers and the caricaturists. On my going to a photographer in Baker Street, a policeman scored off me very neatly. "I want 71, Baker Street, officer." "Sorry, sir, but you can't have it. It belongs to somebody else."

As a rule, with the exception of my gifted friend, Thomas Downey (he has depicted me in the frontispiece to this volume sitting on my own books—as if other people did not sit on them often enough), the caricaturists were disappointed with me, and did not care to hide their disappointment. One man, who seemed to have war terms on the brain, said that I had "no *salient* features to be caricatured." All he could do was to make my head six times the natural size and my legs those of a dwarf.

Lady — "presented her compliments" (instead of a cheque), and ordered me to send her six copies of the "Memoirs" (autographed) and six photographs (signed), and "hoped to be able to sell them at her charity bazaar."

Thus, a poor fellow evidently hit by the hard times:—

Dear Sir,—I don't know you; haven't read your books; am a scribbler myself, and devilishly hard up. Smallest contribution thankfully received.

Yours from necessity,

Some of the other letters addressed to me were more encouraging:—

It's sad you didn't know what became of your little friend, the black cat.

Excellent. Write some more with a little less discretion, and yet not to hurt. It is quite possible. I don't want your autograph, and you probably don't care a d—n for this, my appreciation, &c., &c.

I must write a line to thank you, &c. I have discovered that in this world the way in which people show their appreciation of you is to keep silence—when they disapprove, they find their tongues. Therefore, if no one finds fault with you, you know that they are appreciating you to the full, and that is their way of saying it. This seems to me so wholly wrong that if I come across anything that I like I write and tell the person so. I am not a novel reader, and until I read your book had never heard of you. . . . I see you have written two

books about Spain. I went there last year, and never realised how execrable my manners were till I did so. It is a truly wonderful place, and if only everybody did not spit, and the train service were not so bad, it would be Heaven. I am a clergyman, and here is a story of a boy in my school who was asked what he knew about Titus Oates. "Wasn't he the man who died at the North Pole last year, sir?"

A COUNTRY CLERGYMAN.

Various secretaries from all sorts of charitable organisations wrote to me in a very friendly manner, conclusively proving that now I had become a millionaire it was my duty to be a life subscriber to their Institutions (they always spelt "institutions" with a capital "I") for the mere trifling sum of ten pounds per annum. The Committee of a fund for "Disabled Printers' Devils" sent me a most cordial invitation to their annual dinner, with an intimation that "evening dress is not obligatory." They also thoughtfully enclosed a little pink slip informing me that if I accepted their invitation I was expected to subscribe largely. Then "Our dear brethren the heathen" became aware of me, and also entreated me to send a subscription. This last rather appealed to me, because I have always had a very friendly regard for the heathen who:—

. . . In 'is blindness,
Bows down to wood and stone.
'E don't obey no orders,
Unless they is 'is own.

But on looking more closely into the matter, the base, sordid, calculating spirit in me worked out my financial and moral obligations at about two hundred a year for the rest of my life. Hence the present book. I may as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb, and make it four hundred.

Strictly between ourselves, O Gentle Reader, I propose to call this book "Olla Podrida," because it will ramble along in all sorts of places and describe various things and persons as I happen to think of them. Please, therefore, bear this in mind, and if my publisher's manager calls it something else, circumstances (mostly financial) over which I have no control compel me to listen to his advice.

Sir Walter Scott several times ordered an old retainer to cut down a certain tree. The ancient retainer always evaded doing so until one day, before a large party of friends, Sir Walter angrily asked him why his *order* had not been obeyed. The old retainer looked thoughtfully at the tree in question, and said: "Ah, weel, Sir Walter, I think I'll tak' your advice."

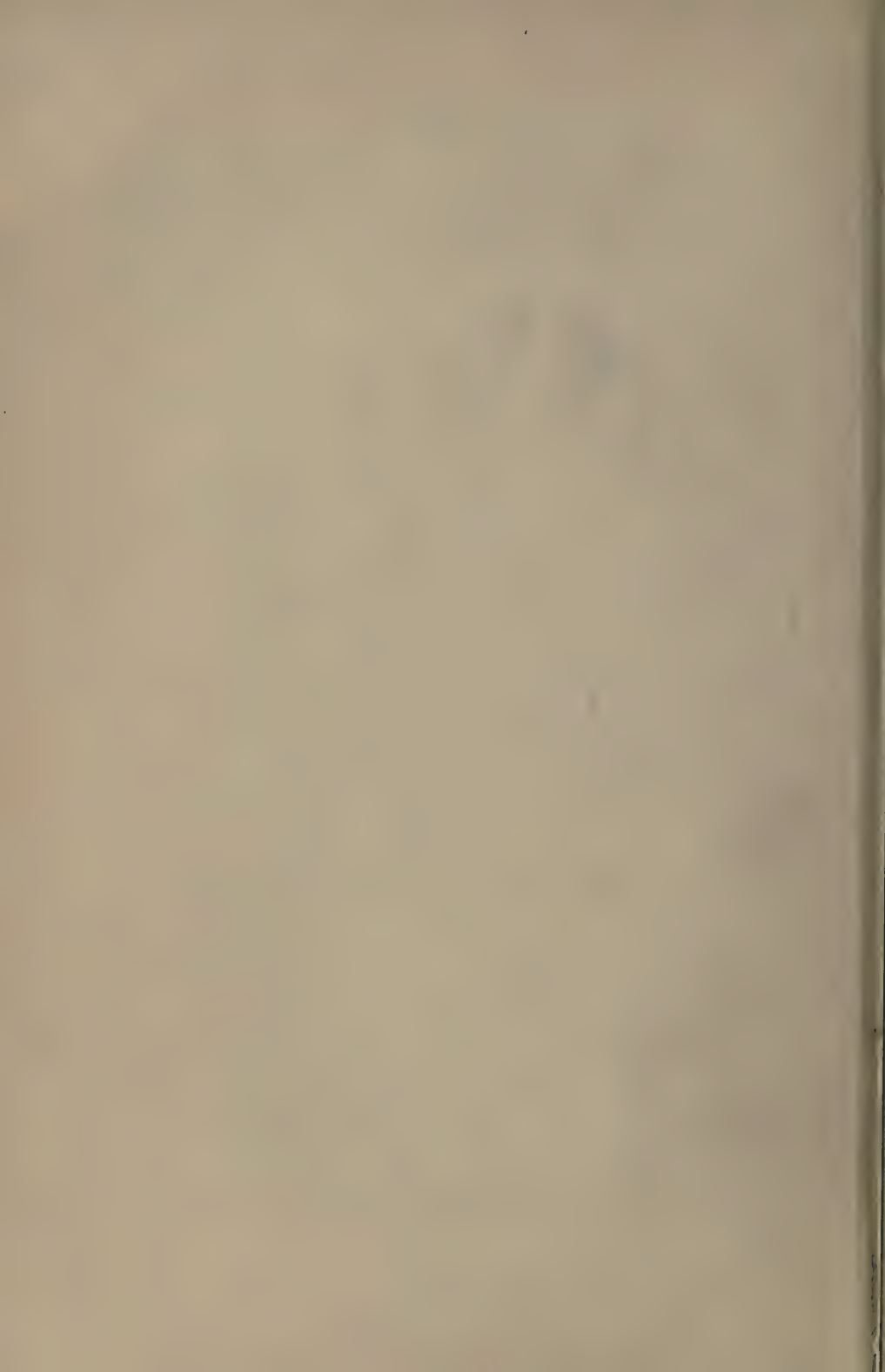
In my previous book lack of space prevented me from giving more than a little sketch of my wanderings abroad. Hence an ampler description of them in the present volume.

Having cleared the ground with these preliminary statements, I will now set to work. My friend, the late Robert Barr, was fond of quoting what he imagined to be Shakespeare:—

Thrice armed is he who hath his quarrel just,
But ten times he who gets his blow in fust.

On second thoughts, another friend, Mr. James Milne, who knows a very great deal about books and their titles, suggests "More Memoirs—and Some Travels" as an appropriate title for these lucubrations. "Although memoirs make me think of death," he kindly added, "and we don't want you to die just yet unless you contemplate writing anything more of this kind." So we will let it go at that.

GEO. B. BURGIN.



More Memoirs

(and Some Travels)

PART I.—ENGLAND

CHAPTER I.

MY EARLY POETIC STRUGGLES

WHEN one begins to write, the obvious course is to tackle the competitions offered by more or less world-weary editors of current publications. There was a sixpenny weekly called *Society*, edited by that kindest and most sympathetic of men, the late Arthur Goddard, Zangwill, Philpotts, Kernahan, St. John Adcock, and a dozen others who have since made their mark in the literary world competed, and I rushed in where angels fear to tread. Sometimes it was a short story; sometimes it was verses—more generally verses; and thereby hangs a tale.

One of the most unobtrusive and charming of literary men is St. John Adcock, of *The Bookman*, who has more than fulfilled the promise of his early youth. When he won a verse competition and I “also ran” I hated him with a bitter and Byronic hatred, mentally called him loathsome worm and other choice epithets of the kind. Now we love one another, but in those days he generally won the competitions, and I used to pray: “Oh, Providence, get that man Adcock smashed under a brewer’s

dray or send him where he can't write." Providence, however, refused to listen to my reasonable petition until I wrote a poem which I felt in my heart would "knock Adcock silly." The prize was a guinea, and we came out even, each receiving ten-and-six. In after years, when we compared notes, Adcock said: "So you're the scoundrel who robbed me of that ten-and-six!" and I said: "Villain of the deepest dye, where's the rest of my guinea?"

Gradually, however, I obtained a footing on various periodicals as a writer of verse, until it was my ill, or good, fortune to encounter an editor who rather prided himself on knowing all about verse. In those crude young days I really meant to be a poet—a sad poet who had had more than enough of the world and was anxious to be out of it—a poet who indulged in sorrow-stricken reflections of what had happened to him fifty years ago in his fiery, unprincipled youth. And I was mournfully reminiscent. This was the sort of thing which upset my verse-loving editor—he could scarcely be called loving in any other respect. And it was not my fault that, having stuck to Fleet Street all his life, he had never heard a cat-bird hiss:—

THE OLD HOME

The trees hang over the garden gate
 In the cool and dusky night.
 As I creep thro' the shadows and hide and wait,
 Afar from the garish light,
 The cat-bird hisses upon its nest,
 And the oriole swings from the bough—
 But those I have loved are laid to rest,
 And I linger in darkness now.

Shall I knock and ask of the strangers there
 To enter each well-known room?
 And search in vain for my mother's chair
 That rocked in the ingle gloom?
 But the birds have flown from the shelt'ring nest
 The last leaf falls from the bough,
 And those I have loved are laid to rest,
 And I linger in darkness now.

No happy voices now sweetly, sing
 The well-known evensong.
 Will ever again those voices ring,
 And the world and its cares and wrong
 Fade swiftly away from that well-loved nest?
 A dewdrop falls from the bough,
 Like a nun's sad tear. Rest, dear ones, rest!
 You have passed thro' the darkness now.

It seemed to me that a really great poem like this would make the editor "sit up," but it did not. I received a letter from him expressing his unalterable conviction that cat-birds did not "hiss," but "mewed," or they would not be called cat-birds, and asking me to be more cheerful and not interfere with the tears of a religious body like nuns. Could I, as a personal favour to him, be a little more rollicking?

This was my youthful idea of rollicking:—

AN AUTUMN REVERIE

No song-bird sang, no sign of life within this ancient garden,
 As fair to me as if Time's strife could neither spoil nor harden
 The tender graces of the past, when, ardent, young, and—silly,
 Beneath its trees I panted fast to pluck my love a lily.

The same old pond wherein I slid, nor thought of woes rheumatic,
 But deem'd, as leaves my visage hid, life's salt was truly Attic;
 The same old moss-grown walk, and gay with lichens spotted over—
 It seems as if 'twere yesterday we found the four-leaved clover.

Onward I toiled beside a rill, and swift imagination
 Made leap to life where all was still and fading vegetation,
 The fancied forms of bygone days, in pleasant pastures shaded,
 And pallid poets' piquant lays of beaux and belles brocaded.

What paste and powder, patches, starch, what solemn dissertations,
 And, oh ye gods, what faces arch, what lingering flirtations,
 What songs to brow, to eye, and lip, what amorous glances lying
 In azure orbs ere lovers sip the kiss for which they're sighing.

The centuries may come and go, and people gravely utter
 Their painful platitudes and slow; the maiden "bread and butter"
 May read by yon majestic oak the woes of chaste Clarissa,
 And as she sighs, some swain, in joke, may softly creep and kiss her.

Oh, world of ours that wags away, so rife with woe and sinning,
 The same old pleasures please to-day as from thy first beginning;
 With all the years that wane and pass, the lore of letter'd ages,
 The slightest smile of saucy lass subdues the souls of sages.

But it was no good. The editor wrote to say that "Clarissa" and "kiss her" did not rhyme, and would I look into the dictionary for a definition of "rollicking"? Would I also, unlike the late Mrs. Dombey, "make an effort" to rouse myself? It was sad to see a young man so introspective.

I looked into the dictionary for a definition of "introspective." Then I "roused" him with a dialect poem, which I hoped he would take as a warning of what might happen to himself if he made me desperate:—

THE EDITOR'S GHOST

The editor "shook" and left us,
 Me and my comrade Jim,
 As night came down on Poker Town,
 And everything grew dim.
 He went with a shootin' party,
 Way over Smithson's Falls;
 "And boys," sezee, "jus' send for me
 If folks gits raisin' squalls."

We didn't go in for a bender—
 You bet your life on that;
 Poor Jim had one suspender,
 And I didn't run to fat,
 For, bein' a printer's "devil,"
 Folks up in the Townships think
 The food for an imp from Greville
 Is nuthin' but printer's ink.

The snow and the wind kep' blowin'
 In at the office door
 As we pegged away at work next day
 Down by the river shore.
 The ice drifts slowly breakin',
 Went slidin' by like ghosts;
 No man or a horse would dare to cross,
 For gone were the guidin' posts.

That night at the window tappin'
 I suddenly heard a noise;
 Jim sat by the old stove nappin',
 And growled out, "Come in, boys."
 But nary a soul kick'd open
 The door, and I thought at first
 Some editor's ghost had broken
 From death to quench his thirst.

And there in the dusky dawnin',
 As faded the last lone star,
 In blood-red stain on the window pane
 We found the followin' "par.":
 "The sheriff and I'd a flurry
 Way down by old Carew's;
 He plugg'd me dead, so go ahead
 And get out a special 'News.'"

He never was man to wander
 Away from his usual work;
 Tho' wiped out over yonder,
 You bet he warn't no shirk.
 The sheriff so strong and hearty,
 Got drown'd on the homeward track,
 And out of that shootin' party,
Only the ghost came back!

There was no satisfying the remorseless editor even with a poem so full of action as that, for he said it "left him cold." With the temperature below zero, of course it left him cold. Naturally, I wanted to "warm him," so tried again with a poem of stern denunciation of the world and all its pomps and vanities, quite regardless of the fact that my knowledge of them was purely theoretical:—

VANITY FAIR

Oh, glittering show,
 Wherein we, meeting, mock our gnawing pain.
 And hide in silken garb the gilded chain
 That galls where'er we go.

Maids sweet and pure,
 Sold for seraglios, like Circassian slave,
 False women meshing Lancelots in false lure—
 Nay, Lancelot's soul was brave!

Arise and pray
 God free from plague-spot foul this fertile land,
 True women and true men walk hand in hand
 Upon Life's upward way.

Vanity fair!
 Time shake thy sands as sad-eyed mortals pass,
 Search each dead heart, and find deep-graven there,
"Omnia vanitas!"

It failed to induce that editor to search his own dead heart, and he wanted to know what right had I to make such

sweeping aspersions on my neighbours, so I endeavoured to hypnotise him into catching cold by sending him a Spring poem :—

SPRING (?)

I know not why men pray for Spring,
Or why they rail at winter's cold;
Why they should be when thus they sing
All "sold";
I only know 'twas ever thus,
With this particular gazelle,
I am, although I hate a fuss,
Unwell.

For "light guitar," read "hoarse catarrh,"
If damsels say "'Tis passing sweet
To view yon star," scent from afar
Wet feet,
And, undismayed, decline to wade
Thro' weary, dreary miles of slosh;
For fairest maid, this deed essayed
Is bosh.

My upper notes are out of tune,
And influenza hovers near;
I labour at this simple rune—
Oh, dear!
Loud 'neath my window comes a stir
Of Teuton brass to woe enhance:
"We are the only true and Sher-
Man Bants."

What is't they play? Some simply lay
Of Spring and all its beauties rare?
Its evils? Nay, they fail to say
Are there.
I cannot smile. Lumbago vile
Possesses my sad form instead,
To me beguile with painful wile
To bed.

I care not for the "burnish'd dove,"
But gaze at it with tearful eye;
'Tis worthy only of man's love
In pie.
Go, tell my landlady to bring
More coals, and heap them on the fire,
And call me when the days of Spring
Expire.

He wrote back: "Have you no pity? I'll give you one more chance." I took it:—

CONTRASTS

I sing a little country maid,
The subject of this ditty,
As sweet as any primrose, stray'd
Within the murky city.

Her eyes were deepest hazel, hair
In wavy coils that wander'd
Around her brow—a sunbeam fair
Gold gleams in it had squandered.

Her simple gown of Hodden Grey
Was brighten'd by a ribbon,
Arranged in some historic way
Unknown to Hume or Gibbon.

So sweet a maid, so fair a face,
That strangers passing slowly
Return'd to view the winning grace
Which made the dim street holy.

A haughty dame stepped slowly down
From out her stately carriage,
Intent on ruling o'er the town
By wealth or lofty marriage.

The little maid look'd up, and sigh'd,
"Oh, for her silks and laces";
The haughty dame look'd down and cried,
"Love, grant me half her graces."

I failed again. The editor rejoined, more in sorrow than in anger: "I don't see what Gibbon had to do with 'ribbon.' I will submit all your verses to a really great poet if you will let me alone and consent to abide by his decision; for if you continue to bombard me with verses at this rate one of us must die, and I would rather that it were you than myself, not only for my own sake, but for the sake of others."

I consented, and this was "the great poet's (?)" verdict: "The author whose poems you have had the mistaken—to call it by no harsher term—kindness to submit to me, is a young man who will never grow old. As a collection of echoes, the poems, although in few other respects, are

interesting. I would earnestly recommend the writer to put them in the dustbin and try prose."

I did not put them in the dustbin, but preserved them to comfort my old age with the thought that if I had kept on writing verse I might have emulated Alfred Austin and become poet-laureate. And, though the incident ended my career as a poet, retribution overtook that other "great poet," for he died shortly after penning the above criticism. Sometimes I have a lurking suspicion that my "poems" hastened his end, and, though I think he might have been a little less blind, in the light of after experience I apologise to his Shade for the shock they gave him.

Still, there remains one poet in the family, for Clarence Rook once told me that my cousin, Arthur Waghorne, of *The Daily Chronicle*, used sometimes to send him three sets of verses a day. But we have this reflection in common—we have never written a line of verse which would make even a cow blush, and now we are too old to blush for ourselves.

CHAPTER II.

AT HOMES, AND OTHER THINGS

IT is a curious face, but authors really go about a little instead of spending the whole of their lives in elevating the world at large. Occasionally, when they do go about, they also become elevated in another sense, but not nearly so much as they used to do. And one of their favourite forms of mild dissipation is the intellectual "At Home." At least, it is supposed to be intellectual; sometimes the guests forget to be intellectual, and are merely human.

The summer literary "At Home" is a much more frivolous affair than that given in the winter, when authors, sometimes to their great astonishment, find themselves under the shelter of a roof. It is a current legend nowadays that every author is prosperous, but I could not conceal my surprise when, on making a tour of a model lodging-house for purposes of "copy," I discovered a certain author grilling what is popularly known as a "two-eyed steak" (*i.e.*, a bloater) in the kitchen set apart for amateur cookery. He airily accounted for his present misfortunes by saying that his last book had not done well, and that the publisher had refused to let him have anything on account. Besides, he could always fancy that he was grilling his publisher instead of the bloater, and this somewhat original method of consolation generally gave him an appetite.

The particular literary "At Home" to which I refer was held in a big suite of rooms of a certain flat. You climbed six storeys heaven-ward, and when you thought

you had arrived at your haven of rest, were sent up another flight in order to leave your hat and coat. "So glad to see you," said my host, beaming at me. "I've got the most delightful woman-writer in the world to introduce you to."

Authors swarmed all over the place; you couldn't move without treading on the corns of some successful novelist, or, if you blundered into a corner, you ran full tilt into a writer on popular science. If you stood in the middle of the room and took a step backward you propelled a prominent society novelist into the arms of a beautiful actress—a deed for which he ought to have been extremely grateful, and wasn't!

Israel Zangwill came into the room looking as if the cares of centuries weighed him down, and was immediately surrounded by a bevy of fair dames and brother-authors. In the space of three minutes he made five jokes—all in the saddest, quietest manner in the world, as if he had thousands of jokes about him somewhere and had only to turn a handle in order to let them loose upon a delighted audience. He stayed a quarter of an hour, and silently faded away into the night.

Zangwill is not in the least sensitive with regard to his appearance. When he was staying in New York he received a letter saying that it was the writer's one wish in life to meet the great author. The man wrote so often that at last Zangwill consented to see him. At the very chiming of the appointed hour there entered an enthusiastic German Jew, who talked and talked and talked "'till he most took root." Zangwill had many other appointments, and at last gently insinuated as much. Still the visitor did not depart. Even Zangwill's patience gave way. "I'm afraid I'm very busy. What can I do for you?" "Ah-h-h! You haf done for me. I haf *seen* you," was the unexpected reply.

Then Jerome K. Jerome appeared. He is growing bald, although a love-lock still overhangs his capacious forehead. Jerome has shaved off his moustache, given up taking snuff, and his shrewd eyes have the old kindly twinkle when

anything amuses him. But he is rapidly getting a middle-aged look, and has a slight tendency to what the old lady called "ong-bong-pong." He went up to a pretty girl who had a cup of coffee in one hand and a sandwich in the other. When she said she could not shake hands he entreated her to go on eating, as it brought her so much nearer to the level of a mere man. We are almost lifelong friends, and I always enjoy going down for a week-end to his charming house on Marlow Common. Marlow Common believes itself to be a Common, but it is in reality a magnificent beech forest, with bits of Common dotted in between the trees. A literary and artistic colony gradually grew up there. One well-known art critic, Alfred Lys Baldry, built himself a "Greek house" between the trees, and experienced great joy in discovering dormice curled up among their roots. His friends forgave him for erecting this somewhat austere residence by insisting on his also constructing a "hard" tennis court where they could play in winter. In order to be quiet, Jerome had a study built over his motor-house, and there, with his favourite books and pictures around him, continues to delight the world. Mrs. Jerome devotes herself to her poultry, and I take this opportunity of reminding her of a certain promise she once made me. I was confiding to her that I wanted to "retire" with a hundred a year certain, a nice little country cottage, and half-a-dozen hens. "Well," said she, "If you get the cottage and the hundred a year, I'll give you the hens." As there are many predatory gipsies camping on and around the Common, Jerome bought the "biggest dog in England," a Great Dane, with a view to making them let the fowls alone. One day he was coming back from a long walk through the beech trees and discovered the Great Dane amicably sharing the gipsies' dinner.

W. W. Jacobs and Pett Ridge came to this "At Home" together. Jacobs looked as if he had had greatness thrust upon him and wished someone would take it off again. He is the shyest and most retiring of men, slight, thin, and rather delicate.

Jacobs was once staying with some friends in the country, and his hostess (she was not literary) watched him pacing up and down the garden walk for three hours. "How idle these literary people are," she said to her husband. "There's Mr. Jacobs been walking up and down the garden for three hours. He told me he was going to work, *and he hasn't written a word.*" It never even occurred to her that he was slowly evolving one of his side-splitting stories.

Jacobs is now an accomplished speaker, but on the first occasion I ever heard him speak he was suffering acutely from nervousness, and, to prove that he was not, held a big cigar in his mouth while he was speaking. It wobbled up and down all the time.

Pett Ridge has a quietly impenetrable manner. He gets into corners and notices people and things; that accounts for his success as an after-dinner speaker, for he observes everything, and always has a suitable anecdote ready to illustrate his point. He was once addressing a wealthy audience on behalf of one of his philanthropic schemes, and told it the story of two little newspaper boys. One was adding up his accounts and the other was eating nuts.

"I'm a 'apenny short in my accounts," said the first boy, and the boy who was eating nuts paid no attention to him. He repeated this statement three times, and at last the other boy said: "Wot's that got to do with me?" "Well," said the first boy, "I'm a 'apenny short in my accounts, *and you're eating nuts.*"

The audience laughed at the story, but did not in the least realise that they were "eating nuts" whilst the poor starved. Yet another little tale of his:—

A young lady of the tender age of twelve was wheeling her baby sister in a pram in the Edgware Road. She became so engrossed in her conversation with another lady of the same mature age that the baby rolled out of the pram in front of a tram, which stopped just in time. A zealous young policeman picked up the yelling baby and brought it sternly to the girl. "Now, young woman, is this

your baby?" "No, 'taint," said the girl. "It's muvver's."

One evening Pett Ridge caught the last 'bus from King's Cross to the suburbs. The 'bus was crowded with people anxious to escape the pouring rain, and one unfortunate man was left outside on the platform. Every time the 'bus stopped this drenched individual looked sadly in to see whether anyone would move. No one did. The man outside looked in again, and said sadly: "Ain't none of you got no bloomin' 'omes?"

On a recent occasion Pett Ridge told the story of a little girl who went to stay with her aunt and gravely watched her saying her prayers upon the first morning. When the aunt rose to her feet again, the little girl said: "Auntie, do you say your prayers now as well as at bedtime?" "Of course," said "auntie." "I say them every morning and night. Surely you do the same?" "Well, but I don't," answered the child. "You see, I say my prayers at bedtime, and in the morning I do breathing exercises."

But I think the most realistic of all this celebrated raconteur's stories is the one which tells of an old woman whom he rescued from the slums and placed in a brand-new model lodging-house. A week later he went to see her, and noticed that she was very unhappy. "Isn't everything all right?" he asked anxiously. "Oh, yes, I s'pose so," said the poor woman sadly, "but there's no denyin' the old place was handy. When I wanted a bit of firewood I could always go and chop it out of the stairs, and here it's all stone steps and iron railings."

Most of the lady novelists present at the "At Home" were as ample as their works. They seemed to thrive upon ink. Editors were as common as blackberries, and not nearly so seedy; but they all seemed to have a habit of screwing up their eyes and staring at everybody as if they feared to be presented with "copy."

As I looked at this intellectual crowd I could not help thinking of a trip I once made in the *Marguerite* to Boulogne. It was the opening day of the season, and

nearly every journal in London was represented on the *Marguerite*. The only individual I was unable to "place" was an old clergyman in a "pot" hat, a frock coat, and cycling knickers. Whether he thought he was going to plough his way across the main to Boulogne on a bicycle, I don't know, but the combination of frock coat, knickers, and "pot" hat was rather quaint. One old Scotch journalist, as we proudly sailed away, turned to me and, after surveying the crowd of passengers, said, with a twinkle in his eye: "Eh, mon, but it would be a sair day for England if we were all to droon."

Whilst on the subject of humorists, I am reminded of an afternoon party to celebrate the removal of Professor and Mrs. Poulteney Bigelow to their new home. Mark Twain was the principal guest, and, seated in a corner with a corn-cob pipe in his mouth—a pipe which Bigelow had reserved for his especial benefit—cheerfully surveyed the host of young people around him. He loved young people. Presently his host came up to him and said that everybody wanted a speech. At first Mark Twain indignantly protested that he had come out to enjoy himself and not to depress others by making a speech. At length he reluctantly consented to speak, and was placed standing in an armchair so that everyone could see his white hair and leonine features. He began his speech with a few half-humorous and jesting remarks, but, warming to the subject, suddenly grew serious, and delivered a most beautiful and touching address on "The Household Gods." When the speech was over he went back into his corner and once more became cheerful. To his friends there was always an underlying current of tenderness and affection in Mark Twain. Inwardly, I think he was a little disappointed that the world had partly failed to recognise his intense hatred of shams and desire to abolish many abuses by means of his humorous, though caustic, comments on them.

When dealing with his favourite, "Joan of Arc," Mark Twain sometimes forgot her times, and became funnily modern. Witness, for example, the way in which

he describes Joan's pets. The child Joan might be living in a backwoods American village:—

The birds and the other timid wild things of the woods were not afraid of her, but always had an idea that she was their friend when they came across her, and generally struck up an acquaintance with her to get invited to the house, so she always had samples of these breeds in stock. She was hospitable to them all, for an animal was an animal to her, dear by reason of being an animal, no matter about its sort or social station; and, as she would allow of no cages, no collars, no fetters, but left the creatures free to come and go as they liked, that contented them and they came; but they didn't go to any extent, and so they were a marvellous nuisance, and made Jacques d'Arc swear a good deal; but his wife said God gave the child the instinct, and knew what He was doing when He did it; therefore it must have its course; it would be no sound prudence to meddle with His affairs when no invitation had been extended.

Public opinion seems to recognise as Mark Twain's successor, on the other side of the water, Stephen Leacock, the gifted Professor of Political Economy at McGill University and author of many mirth-moving books. As *Punch* sang of him:—

With you, O enchanting Canadian,
 We laughed till you gave us a stitch
 In our sides at the wondrous Arcadian
 Exploits of the indolent rich;
 We loved your satirical sniping,
 And followed, far over "the pond,"
 The Lure of your whimsical piping
 Behind the Beyond.

And yet, though so freakish and dashing,
 You are not the slave of your fun,
 For there's nobody better at lashing
 The crimes and the cant of the Hun;
 Anyhow, I'd be proud as a peacock
 To have it inscribed on my tomb;
 "He followed the footsteps of Leacock
 In banishing gloom."

Although nominally a Canadian, Leacock was born at Swanmoor, Hants, on December 30th, 1869. His parents migrated to Canada in 1876, and he decided to go with them. Eventually, his father took up a farm near Lake Simcoe, in Ontario. This was during the hard times of

Canadian farming. By great diligence, Leacock Senior was able to pay the hired men, and in years of plenty to raise enough grain to have seed for the next year's crop without buying any. Owing to this process, Leacock and his brothers were inevitably driven off the land, and have become professors, business men, and engineers, instead of being able to grow up as farm labourers. Yet he saw enough of farming to speak exuberantly in political addresses of the joy of early rising and the deep sleep, both of body and intellect, induced by life on a farm.

A short time ago Leacock was the guest of a literary club to which I belong, and when I was called on to speak I explained how that morning I had been walking in Highgate Cemetery and paused by the tomb of Lord Strathcona. One of the Cemetery custodians joined me, and said regretfully: "Lord Strathcona's the only distinguished Canadian we have here." Then he brightened up a little. "But there's a vacant lot beside his lordship." Whereupon I explained to him that, curiously enough, I was going to meet another distinguished Canadian that evening, and would try to induce him to make the necessary arrangements for occupying the vacant space by Lord Strathcona. Leacock listened to this with strained attention. On rising to reply, he disregarded the points made by the other speakers, and said: "Whilst I am deeply grateful to Mr. Burgin for his thoughtful arrangements regarding my obsequies, I regret to inform him they will have to be cancelled, as I have already decided to be buried in Westminster Abbey." He told us, after we had adjourned to the National Liberal Club and enviously regarded its costly new carpets, that many of his friends seemed to think he wrote his humorous nothings in idle moments when the wearied brain was unable to perform the serious labours of the economist. His own experience was exactly the other way, for he found sufficiently easy the writing of solid, instructive stuff, fortified by facts and figures. There was no trouble in originating a scientific treatise on the folk-lore of Central China, or a statistical

inquiry into the declining population of Prince Edward Island. But to write something out of one's mind, worth reading for its own sake, was an arduous undertaking only to be achieved in fortunate moments, few and far between. Personally, he would much sooner have written "Alice in Wonderland" than the whole Encyclopædia Britannica. And his personality was so pleasant that I believed him, although he had been the means of causing me a good deal of trouble on my last trip to Canada. I wanted to "place" some of my novels in Canada, and every publisher I met said: "Are they bright little things like Leacock's?" When I said they were "bright little things like Burgin's" they invariably "turned me down."

One morning I found the following letter on the breakfast table:—

As I see that you are interested in most things about authors, I send you a line to ask if you will come down to X—— to help me with your advice in reference to an experiment of mine in connection with the literary craft. As the matter is somewhat pressing, I shall be much obliged if you will come as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully, W——.

I was met at the station next day by a worried-looking old gentleman in a pony-chaise drawn by a fat, but dejected, pony. "He won't go away," he said ruefully, after we had exchanged greetings.

"Who won't?"

"He won't." The old gentleman said nothing more until we reached his house. Then he drew me into the back garden and sat down on a bedding-out frame. "Hush-h-h!" he said, and looked fearfully around.

I lit a cigarette, but the old gentleman snatched it out of my mouth. "He'll see the smoke," he said tremblingly, "and it's all along of you."

"What is?"

"He is. You see, you recently referred in print to the first Lord Lytton having once started a home for 'decayed' authors, and, as I am an old bachelor and

36 More Memoirs—and Some Travels

haven't done much for my fellow-creatures, I—I advertised."

"What for?"

"A 'decayed' author; and I've got him. I wish I hadn't. He's been here a week."

"Well, isn't that what you wanted?"

"I don't know what I wanted. But I advertised that I would be willing to comfort the declining years of a 'decayed author,' not too much decayed, but just enough decayed to make him companionable; and he wrote and asked if I were a Christian. If I were not a Christian, nothing would induce him to accept my hospitality. In a weak moment I said that I was a Christian, and so the man came and brought his carpet bag with him."

"Well?"

"It isn't well; and I'm not well either, for he won't go away. Says he's settled down in the peace of the country for the rest of his life, and is going to 'make his soul' at my expense."

The old gentleman was a teetotaler and non-smoker, The Decayed Author was neither. His luggage, in addition to the carpet bag, consisted of a jar of Scotch whisky and a big packet of tobacco. It appeared that the author in question declined to take exercise, was very particular about his food, never went to bed until three in the morning, and would not allow the old gentleman to do so either. He was writing a history of the Plymouth Brethren—*i.e.*, he dictated it to the old gentleman, and made him write it. "In fact," said the old gentleman with a groan, "he looks upon me as a private secretary and valet, and orders me about as if this were an hotel. Can't you make him go away. I'll cheerfully give anything up to twenty pounds if he will only go."

"Of course. I'll take him by the scruff of his neck and——"

"How de do, Burgin?" said a pleasant voice at my elbow, and old Sammy Casselton strolled through the French window. He was clad in his host's dressing-gown—a magnificent garment of imperial purple—and wore a

smoking cap to match. "My presentation gown from the inhabitants of X—," whispered the old gentleman. "Tell him I'll give him twenty-five pounds to go away."

"I've come to turn you out of this, Casselton," I said severely. "Why are you playing the fool here? Is this one of your jokes?"

"I don't think the old gentleman finds it a joke. I've worried him a good deal, but I've had nearly enough of it. Are you another 'decayed' author?"

"No, I'm not; I'm only just ripening, and you'll have to come back to town with me, Casselton."

"All right," said Casselton. Then he turned to Mr. W. "Just go and pack my bag. You needn't worry about the jar; it's empty."

When the old gentleman had crept away, Casselton angrily turned on me. "Teach him a lesson not to insult authors with his infernal charity again. If we can't make enough to live on we'll die on it, that's all. When I saw his advertisement I thought I'd 'larn' him not to advertise for 'decayed' authors any more. Do I look 'decayed'?"

"No, you're uncommonly well preserved—in whisky. Come along at once, after you've apologised."

And the old gentleman was so pleased at getting rid of Casselton that he asked us to stay to lunch, whereat we discussed literature in all its phases.

There is one kind of literature I do not meet with every day. But a few Sundays ago I chanced to encounter a red-nosed man, clad in rusty black, with a shambling, shuffling, toadlike gait and a voice which nearly lifted the roof off the third-class carriage in which I sat. A celebrated author was once travelling in a lowly motor-'bus when in popped an equally celebrated woman novelist, and began to explain to him that she always travelled in a 'bus because she had once been thrown out of her Rolls-Royce, and it had made her nervous. "Indeed," said the celebrated author, "I always travel in a 'bus because it's cheaper!" "Then," said she, "I shan't ask you to my next 'At Home.' You're evidently more at home in a 'bus."

But I am forgetting my red-nosed man. I was industriously cutting the pages of a new novel on that holy Sabbath morn when the red-nosed man shambled into the carriage. A woman with four small children, boys and girls, also occupied the carriage, and the red-nosed man, after casting a glance of holy horror at me, began with a sharklike smile to boom at the children. "Little gurl," he said to the eldest, "can you read the Lord's word?" She put a finger in her mouth and began to cry. Then he hypnotised the small boy, and handed him a blue pamphlet. "It's all about the wounded and the dead," he said, with a strong emphasis on "dead."

Having put two of us out of action, the red-nosed man turned to the mother of the family—a tired, decent body in black and a weary smile. "Can she read?" he asked, pointing to the third child. "Oh, yes," said the mother, with eager pride and a strong Cockney accent. "She's in the second standard; she——" "Is she a standard bearer for the Lord?" asked the red-nosed man, and gave her a tract also.

Then he gave me one. The leaflet was headed "Personal." It was very personal. "Please sign that," said the red-nosed man to me in a bull-frog kind of voice. This is what he wanted me to sign:—

If I die to-night I will go to H. . . .

Signed.....

Date.....

"What does 'H' stand for?"

"For 'eaven or 'ell."

"But I want to go to——"

"'Eaven?" he asked hopefully. "Oh, my dear friend, do you want to go to 'Eaven?"

"No, Wood Green; and I'm not your 'dear friend,' but a mere novelist."

He looked at me for a moment. "There *may* be room in 'Eaven even for 'ardened novelists," he said solemnly.

A much pleasanter thing than the red-nosed man's tract was a letter I once received from a seriously-minded Quaker in America. "I would have thee consider," he wrote, "that

this is an appropriate time to inculcate the vanity of literary greatness on thy readers. Thee hast evidently a more serious frame of mind than thy frivolous contemporaries; and I would have thee turn it to meditating on the higher uses of Literature, even as William Wordsworth meditated on them with much spiritual profit. Thy friend. Amos Sheldon. Springfield. Mass., U.S.A."

Let us meditate accordingly.

If you meet a man who does something better than you can do it, your immediate impulse is either to call him an ass or to think him one. And that is the point of view taken by some unsuccessful novelists. They drag out a laborious existence, vainly longing for half a brick to heave at the successful brother author, "sitting on the pinnacle of his office chair and thinking himself everybody," as a man once wrote to a gifted editorial friend of mine.

It is so much more comfortable not to be a successful author. To be great means constant self-abnegation. Why should you cry to the gods: "O Gods, make me great!" Why do you want to be great?

The crying sin of author folk is the confounding of our personalities with our work. We have not the greatness of mind when we see others succeed as, we deem, unworthily, to know the cause of our non-success is in ourselves; that there is some flaw in us, some self-consciousness which prevents our art from ringing true, some thought of our own blatant egotism which must be fed with recognition, indiscriminate praise, large cheques. Our idea of Art is—large sales; our idea of Heaven—a neat little club wherein the ten-pounds-a-thousand-words men shall have a room to themselves, and the one-pound-a-thousand-words men shall be cast into the outer darkness of the passage, and not come betwixt the wind and our nobility.

Of course, this is all wrong. Art for Art's sake and an occasional crust is the ideal creed. True greatness means infinite pains, infinite burdens, infinite responsibility. You must live for your Art alone, deny yourself the sweetness of human affections whilst understanding the sweetness of

them for others; you must comprehend all, forgive all, and so steadily perfect yourself in your Art. As Kipling puts it:—

No one shall work for money, and no one
shall work for fame,
But each for the joy of the working, and
each, in his separate star,
Shall draw the Thing as he sees it for
the God of Things as They Are.

And when we have drawn the thing as we see it, why not do away with the cumbrous system of publishing books? Now that phonographs are as common as household words—household words are also becoming considerably commoner on account of the phonograph—it would be easy for an author to write his book and, without going to the expense of having it printed, simply arrange with Messrs. Smith or Messrs. Mudie that they should supply all their subscribers with a phonograph. Instead of the book being printed in chapters, it could be duplicated on so many cylinders. The subscriber sends somebody to Messrs. Smith for the cylinders of, say, Sir Hall Caine's or Sir Anthony Hope's new book. He takes the cylinders home, fits them on the phonograph, and, leaning comfortably back in his armchair, hears the book read to him aloud.

An improvement on this method would be for Messrs. Smith or Messrs. Mudie to retain the services of half-a-dozen professional elocutionists. A man with an admirable voice could lend a very great charm to the words of the author; or, better still, when an author has finished a book, each part in it might be "cast" in very much the same way as a new play is "cast"—that is, someone would represent the heroine, someone the villain, someone the "heavy lead," and the author himself perhaps read the descriptive bits. Thus one would get a combined novel and play at a very trifling expense, and could listen to it without the slightest physical inconvenience.

There is a great future for a scheme of this sort, although, of course, the drawback would be the initial cost of furnishing every subscriber with a phonograph. Think, however,

of the inestimable comfort it would be to invalids, for instance, to be able to master the contents of books without taking the trouble to read them. If you hire someone to read to you, you do it by the hour, and are naturally anxious to get your money's worth; if you have a phonograph, you can let it talk to you for five or ten minutes, as the case may be, then switch it off and turn it on again whenever you feel inclined.

CHAPTER III.

VARIOUS KINDS OF AUTHORS

IN addition to the ordinary inside and outside, there are many other sides to an author, particularly the journalistic author, who, although a peaceable man as a rule, sometimes has his quarrels like the rest of us. The brilliant and greatly lamented Spencer Leigh Hughes told me of a memorable dinner during his Palestine trip with the ex-Kaiser: "Charles Hands, of the *Daily Mail*, and I lived in a tent outside the walls of Jerusalem. We were the only representatives of the halfpenny papers there. We put up a card: 'The Halfpenny Press—Hughes and Hands; God bless our little home.' It happened that amongst the party were Charlie Williams, the war correspondent, and Melton Prior, the war artist. These men were not on speaking terms; they had quarrelled twenty years before, although they had both forgotten the origin of the quarrel, and both spoke at each other through me.

"One night, whilst we were dining outside the walls of Jerusalem, a cock began to crow. With the cocks and hens all night and the Kaiser all day, we got very little rest. I made the thoughtless remark that the cock's voice sounded wheezy enough to make it identical with the fowl which disturbed Peter in that part of the world. Melton Prior made a dry remark about St. Peter and the difficulty of getting past him at the Gate. Charlie Williams, although given to strong language, was a very devout man, and he opened fire on us. 'I will not,' he said, 'have my faith caricatured by the miserable specimen of humanity sitting

by you.' I said it was my fault in having introduced the name of Peter. Prior said: 'Don't apologise to that old ruffian at the end of the table.' So I continued to sit as a buffer State between the contending parties."

Let us now take some of the component parts of the average author, the various aspects in which he appears to himself—or fancies he does—and how the outside world generally regards him.

For instance, there is the author who "drops out," and will not admit it until circumstances compel him to acknowledge the direful truth. I have been looking over a magazine of my early youth, containing short stories and novels by men and women who were then the great writers of their time. That is only fifty years ago, and yet, when I turned to "Who's Who" to find some traces of ten out of the twelve writers represented in the magazine, one survived. The others were forgotten.

The mistake of the average author is to imagine that his brain will always be fresh, his imagination as original as in the days of his youth. He does not look ahead or realise that there will come a time when the weary fingers refuse to write, the tired brain to respond. And so your average author goes on writing day after day until he gradually becomes a mere husk of his former self, his Press "notices" grow less and less laudatory, and at last all the world knows, although he does not, that he is "dropping out."

But the curious part of this "dropping out" is that in many cases it is not the author's fault. The British Public makes up its mind that an author shall have a certain vogue. While that vogue endures, he may write anything he pleases. But directly his vogue is over, the public's interest in his work, although his books may be just as good as they were a few years ago, ceases altogether. In short, the British Public has had enough of him, has grasped his methods, and is in search of some young writer who can charm it with the unfamiliar.

One of my first editors was a man who has now "dropped out." For at least thirty years he must have written two

novels a year. These novels were distinguished by much thought and originality; he was always sound though seldom brilliant; and, above all, was reckoned eminently safe for the "young person" to read. Sneer as we may at the "young person," she is one of the most important factors in what constitutes the reading public. There are so many of "her," that she pervades everything; and the would-be author should always be careful to keep on his writing-table the photograph of a young girl clad in "book muslin." If he forgets to do this, sooner or later retribution overtakes him, and the smiling young damsel in white becomes Nemesis. Paterfamilias and Materfamilias grow tired of smuggling the author's books out of the way of the "young person," and find it easier to ask at Mudie's or Smith's for works which, like certain horses recommended to elderly gentlemen, are "safe." The author who has a reputation for "safeness" is in less danger of dropping out than any other. Young maidens of sixteen who have read him, in their turn recommend him to their daughters; and so the good work goes on, even to the third and fourth generation. By the way, I was once told of a contributor to *Truth* who went to see "Labby" and found a portrait of the "young person" at "Labby's" elbow. "She's here to keep an eye on me," said the great man.

When the author is at the top of the tree, he has little or no time to think of the Nemesis which will ultimately overtake him if he is not eminently "safe." I can recall the gallant struggle made by an old friend of mine who had, with unflinching regularity, written two novels, besides numberless short stories, every year. Suddenly, however, his vogue declined. He wrote just as well as ever, but there was no sale for his books. Instead of having contracts three or four years ahead, he was only two years ahead, then one, and at last found himself staring disconsolately at his desk, on which lay the finished MS. of a novel for which he had not received any order at all. He took the MS. to a literary agent, and informed the agent in a deprecatory way that this was the first time he had ever done anything of the sort. The agent was polite but not hopeful.

He said that there were younger men coming into the field, and that the older men would have to get out of it.

It dawned upon my friend that he was old, and he went back to his wife with the discovery. She was one of those rare women who, instead of reproaching him with his lack of popularity, affected to think it the most natural thing in the world. "Of course, my dear," she said, "you've worked hard all your life. Don't you think it time you had a rest? We've saved enough to live in comfort for the rest of our days. Only last week you wanted to grow apple trees. We'll take a little place in the country with a couple of acres of ground, and grow apple trees. Of course, you can go on with your work in a leisurely fashion. There's that book you've been saving up as an occupation for your old age. What seems a misfortune is really a blessing in disguise. Leave that book with the agent; it doesn't matter a straw whether he sells it or not; and we'll look out for a place where we can plant an orchard." Then this good woman kissed him tenderly and went away with tears in her eyes, for she knew well enough that the retirement to the country was compulsory, but, with all the sweetness of true womanhood, let her husband down as gently as possible.

The man who was "dropping out" found a charming place in Devonshire where he could live comfortably and still have a little money to spend on apple trees. At first he felt heartbroken. By and by the sweet influences of country life stole over him. Inspiration began to return, and in two years he wrote the book of his life. As he sat under the one great apple tree—a tree which his wife had begged him to spare until the new trees grew to a respectable size—the book gradually wrote itself. Perhaps one of his former publishers would take it for pity's sake? But even if it were taken in this way it would not be pushed, so his wife, good woman that she was, again came to the rescue.

"I've an idea, John, people are so fond of young writers that they're sometimes a little unjust to the old ones. Suppose you send this story, under an anonymous name, to a

pushing young publisher? Make believe you're a poor young Devonian eager to enter the literary arena. Being a young publisher, he'll not recognise how full of ripe knowledge and wisdom the story is. The fraud will hurt no one, and if the publisher enthuses about the book, it will amuse us very much in our old age to see how it gets on."

The man who was "dropping out" took his wife's advice (he had a new apple tree he wanted to plant, and it seemed so much more important than the writing of books), found his very young publisher, and, after much cautious haggling, advanced £50 toward the publication of the book, although he would much rather have spent the money on apple trees. It came out, took the world by storm, and brought him a large sum of money. Up to this day the secret has been kept. The "promising young author" sits beneath his apple trees, writes his books without effort; and the world marvels at the wisdom of one so young.

By the way, should authors, old or young, accept titles? Most of them, nowadays, with the exception of John Galsworthy, do so as a matter of course. I gravely propounded the question at a literary club the other night. The general opinion of the authors there was that an author should take all he can get. The assembly refused to regard the question seriously. But it should be taken seriously. "Why," argues your author with social aspirations, "should I not be knighted as well as a theatrical manager or an actor?"

The main business of an author is to write, to study human nature, and "when found, make a note of." If he becomes a rich man and seeks social recognition, though he may meet interesting people in his new sphere his types will have a certain sameness about them. Whereas your peripatetic vagabond of an author, who knows not where to lay his head, but strolls jovially through the world, observing something fresh every day, sees life as it is. He has no handle to his name; there is no object in deceiving him. No one cares what he sees or how he sees it; but when, driven to work by stress of circumstance, he sits down and produces a great book, everyone admits the

greatness of it. An author with a title has a tendency to sniff at anything that comes betwixt the wind and his nobility, and his views of life become somewhat distorted. But, then, on the other hand, the author with a title can mix in a certain class of society which is impossible for the vagabond.

The title in literature which should be abolished is that of Poet Laureate, although there have been Laureates in bygone times who would not have shone when compared with the present holder of the post. It is we who have moved on. Tennyson, for instance, lifted us to the heights; and we are reluctant to go down hill again. There is no doubt that at one time the post should have been given to the late Algernon Charles Swinburne; but I have it on the best authority that when sounded as to his willingness to accept the post, unlike Barkis, he was not willing. His political opinions rendered the acceptance of such an offer incongruous, and he wisely declined to stultify himself.

It is rather a pity for the titled author, instead of following "the simple life" to live the "society life." Let him consider the fate of his brother craftsman, the artist, hampered by social aspirations and a studio in the Melbury Road. The modern Old Man of the Sea assumes different shapes, but whatever shape he takes, his appetite is always the same; he must be fed so many times a day. In the struggle to feed him, the artist grows old and worn, his freshness fades away, and at last the Old Man of the Sea transfers himself to other shoulders after having sucked all the vital juices of his slave.

The simpler and more unpretentious life the author leads, the better his work. But of late years there has arisen a commercial class of author—the man who might just as well have started a butter shop or a grocer's; the man who says to himself: "Bother divine afflatus. I'm not in this thing for fun, but to make it pay. Now, let me see. What do people want? Something bluggy? Very well, I will besprinkle them with gore, and attract many shekels from their pouches." And the last state of that man is worse than the first. He does not appreciate what the earth can

give him; does not roam the woods of the North, "Watch Niagara's foaming torrents pour,"* travel the prairies, cross the Nevadas, and then return to his work, saying: "'Twas well, O soul; 'twas a good preparation you gave me."

Of course he does not. He goes into the "literary business" to accumulate money, and succeeds in the attempt. That is the kind of man who, in the eyes of the crowd, makes literature respectable. And there will be no great harm done if this sort of machine monopolises all the titles going. It will not hurt anyone else, and will please him. After all, we generally read the books we want to read, and not the books which others think are good for us to read. An old governess of the days of my early childhood had always been deterred from reading Chaucer on the ground that he was "so indelicate for gentlewomen!" But at last she made the plunge, and was caught by the master of the house in the act. Charmed by her conversion, he asked which of the "Tales" she was reading. "Oh, if you please," she answered, blushing celestially rosy red, "it was—it was something dreadful about a window."

Perhaps the most engaging of all authors is the Literary Puppy. He generally comes from the country after beginning his literary career in the Poet's Corner of the local paper—a very good beginning, for the comments of friends, when they see a young relation "dropping into poetry," are more caustic than flattering, and act as a salutary warning against the dangers of authorship. But our Literary Puppy, heedless of these warning voices, collects a little money with which to make the plunge, and one fine morning, in all the delightful innocence of youth, defies a tribe of angry relations, slings his knapsack on his shoulder, and

* I once paid a visit to the Cave of the Winds at Niagara. Several other persons went down also, and we were all clad in mackintosh suits and hoods which completely concealed our identity. One young man was so overpowered by the solemnity of the scene, that he gave the man, as he supposed, next to him a resounding thwack on the shoulder. "I say, old chap, this is damned fine." There came a shrill shriek from the supposed "old chap." "Are you aware, sir, that you are addressing and vulgarly pommelling a clergyman's daughter?" He fled—into Niagara.

“ Starts for Philadelphia in the morning,” “ Philadelphia,” in this instance, being London—that Mecca of all literary aspirants.

It is rather fine thus to burn one's boats, to set forth with a crust in one's pocket, to dare the Universe; for, practically, that is what it comes to. When the Literary Puppy reaches London, his first care, if he has a proper sense of reverence, is to visit Fleet Street, lay a laurel wreath on Oliver Goldsmith's tomb in the Temple, leave a card at “ Ruth Pinch's ” fountain, and call on Poets' Corner. When he has done all these things, taken rooms, and made his first acquaintance with the London landlady, he has leisure to sit down in his little garret, look forth at the glorious London sunset softened by a smoky haze, and say to himself: “ This is the place where I am going to begin.”

But oh! the anxieties, sorrows, rebuffs, troubles of that beginning. Your Literary Puppy finds that puppies are at a discount in London. He is still unbroken, he knows nothing; and yet somewhere in the recesses of his soul feels that he has the makings of a writer in him. He leads laborious days and nights, writes by a flickering oil lamp as the morning star looks in to see how he is getting on, and flings himself at length upon his pallet thinking that he is serving a hard apprenticeship, but that some day he will blossom forth upon an admiring world. There is that little story he has written about the landlady, which is sure to be accepted by some discriminating London editor. He pictures himself sending copies of it home; he sees people meet in the road and stop to talk it over; he hears them say how wrong it was of them to try to keep him in the country. What was that?

“ That ” is what a celebrated novelist once called, “ the dull, sickening thud of rejected manuscript in the letter-box.” Our poor Puppy's day-dream is momentarily shattered. His story comes back minus a page, and considerably the worse for its travels. But the Puppy shakes his head ruefully, sits down to repair damages, and sends it forth again. By this time he has made the acquaintance of one or two old Fleet-streeters, who instruct him how to

pin a few stamps on the first page of the manuscript and write his name and address there. They also discourage his habit of sending a long and confidential letter to the Editor informing him why he left home, and how Aunt Jane has cut him off with a shilling.

When the Literary Puppy has had fifty or sixty short stories rejected, and is made to feel that he must begin with small things, he has already put one foot on the ladder of Fame. The day on which he decides to try journalism is another move in an upward direction. He goes down to the office of one of the great papers with an introduction to the Editor, who hands him over to another Editor, who sends him to report a fire, or a bazaar, and the Literary Puppy comes back with a column and a half on the subject allotted to him. Then the Editor, with a pitying smile, explains to the Literary Puppy that he must "boil it down" one half. "Which half?" asks the Literary Puppy; and the Editor, with another pitying smile, informs him that the utmost space for this item is four lines and a half, for which The Puppy will receive the sum of two shillings.

The Puppy goes home and bedews his threadbare coat-sleeve with salt tears. Then he pulls himself together, shakes his shaggy mane angrily, and gambols once more into the area of journalism; captures four fires, two or three bazaars, an accident at Ludgate Circus, and comes back to the Editor, who pats him on the back approvingly because he is not too proud to learn his business. Then the Editor, if he is a good-natured fellow, sends him off to do something more important, and thus, by degrees, the Literary Puppy earns his daily bread.

After this he generally has three or four years of heart-breaking humiliation, rejection, striving, suffering, sorrow of every kind; but all these things gradually reveal the Divine spark within him, make a man of him. He learns to observe, to see his fellows as they really are, and accumulates something to write about. And there is instilled into him the intoxication of London's literary atmosphere. He finds out that there is nothing like it in the world; that

however authors may snarl and quarrel with one another occasionally, there is between them all a deep-rooted bond of fellowship which nothing can break. They are an army united by the tradition of England's literary greatness, that greatness which first grew up around the scenes in which they are now privileged to walk.

As soon as the Literary Puppy finishes his first book, and persuades a confiding publisher to take it, he emerges from his puppyhood. There is something sacred to an author about the birth of his first book; it is as real to him as the first man-child placed in the arms of a young father. It is something of his own creating—something given forth from his own individuality—something which is his alone—something which he sends tremblingly into the world, this first-begotten child of his brain.

Thus, in the fullness of time, the Literary Puppy grows up, and does not regret that he came to London. It is only when he is no longer a puppy, but an old, blind, maimed and halting dog that he packs his belongings and creeps back to the country to die. He has been to London Town, has shot his bolt, has had his day, his measure of fame; and now that it is all over he can look out of the little window where he first saw the light and thank God for the peaceful old age vouchsafed him.

A striking contrast to the Literary Puppy was an old author whom I met in Fleet Street the other day. He wore a dirty brown overcoat (erstwhile he had been dapper and debonair), and, metaphorically speaking,

The big round tears
Coursed one another down his innocent nose
In piteous chase.

“What's the matter?” I asked. He said that nothing much was the matter except that he had written a really great book, and that Mudie's had knocked off half their usual order, Smith's looked coyly upon him, and the suburban libraries had intimated that unless there was what Chevalier calls a “soupon” of immorality in it, his novel was dished. “Well, why don't you go home and put a little—eh—flavour into it?” I asked. “Didn't know until

it was too late," he mournfully remarked, as he went off to Attenborough's.

That reminds me of another author who used to dine at a well-known restaurant every evening, and had one special seat reserved for him. At about ten every night he always fell soundly asleep until closing time. "Isn't that gentleman there rather overcome by the wine cup?" I asked a waiter one evening. "No, sir, no," said the waiter, busily wiping the little marble-topped table. "He never drinks wine, sir. I shouldn't say he's overcome, sir; not really squiffey, so to speak; but he does get a bit of a flavi—our about him by this time of night."

Some people imagine that the modern author has a very easy time of it. Has he!

The average author nowadays has to combine novel-writing, short-story writing, serial writing, and the manufacture of sundry diurnal columns in order to enable him to live. That is a base, prosaic necessity which, when he makes up his mind to start as a writer, he altogether overlooks. Later on the matter forces itself upon his attention in more ways than one.

Being a human being, he generally marries some pretty girl, whose prettiness gradually disappears under the corroding influence of household cares and a large family of small future novelists.

Well, now, suppose that your author writes two books a year, each book about eighty thousand words. An average newspaper column is, roughly speaking, a thousand words. This means that your author, in the course of three hundred and sixty-five days, has to turn out one hundred and sixty columns. Perhaps he makes two hundred pounds altogether for these two novels. He cannot possibly live on £200 a year, and he must write more columns in order to pay the butcher's bill. So he devotes the morning to novels, the afternoon to columns, the evening to stories. The difference between him and St. Simeon Stylites is that St. Simeon sat on his own column; the author can always find plenty of people to sit on his. But these columns, which seem so easy to most people, can only be spun out

of the brain. An author has to waste time going about among his fellow-creatures in order to collect material. Thus, his day is pretty well occupied. So much so, indeed, that he scarcely knows whether he has a soul or not. He must dress well, keep up appearances, provide pretty frocks for his wife, and see that his children are properly educated. If your author has travelled in his youth, he is provided with a store of material; but if he has always been a home bird, he has nothing to fall back upon. Then comes the brain strain of manufacturing something out of nothing. After that—drink!

Why did he become an author? Simply because the curse descended upon him. The man who feels that he ought to be an author never is of the slightest good for anything else. If he is in a tea-merchant's office, he merely spoils the tea; but if you put him into a newspaper office, he becomes a journalist and does good work. It is all on the somewhat overcrowded knees of the gods; and the people who write have no more reason to complain than the people who read—sometimes not nearly so much. You know the author who was condemned to die and told that he would be pardoned if he read through a history he had written in twenty large volumes. He preferred death. Which reminds me of Morley Roberts' story of the man who crept into a thicket in search of a bear, and suddenly found himself confronted by the biggest grizzly on earth. "And then?" asked an awestruck youth. "What happened then?" "Then?" said the narrator airily. "Why, then, sir, I guess I died like a man."

CHAPTER IV.

BOOKS OF OUR YOUTH

I WAS once listening to the Rt. Hon. Augustine Birrell, M.P., as he gently talked in all the proud consciousness of having enriched the English language with the term "Birrelling." Up to that moment I had never heard Mr. Birrell speak. When I did hear him, I realised that he supplied what advertisers call "a long-felt want"—*i.e.*, the art of touching upon ordinary things pleasantly with all the earnestness of profound conviction. I do not mean to imply that it is not pleasant to listen to Mr. Birrell. On the contrary, it is very pleasant indeed; but I was somewhat struck by the tone of gentle pessimism with which he dilated on the importance of books in the scheme of life. Then he asked who was the first man who read "Paradise Lost" right through. It was a clergyman of the name of Tomkins—Thomas Tomkins, deputy of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Charles II. revived the censorship. He divided books into classes, and handed poetry over to the Archbishop. The Archbishop could not be expected to read "Paradise Lost," and he handed it over to Tomkins. Tomkins took a long time over it, and he did not like it. Tomkins was in doubt about "Paradise Lost." There were lines in it to which he objected. In particular he did not like the lines:

As when the sun, new risen,
Looks through the horizontal, misty air,
Shorn of his beams, or from behind the moon
In dim eclipse disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations and with fear of change,
Perplexes Monarchs.

These lines are, so some think, magnificent. Tomkins was not concerned with magnificence, but with treason—the lines puzzled Tomkins. To suppose Monarchs can ever be perplexed by fear of change, savoured of sedition. But at last “Paradise Lost,” with a few alterations, was licensed. We laugh at Tomkins, yet Tomkins was an educated man and a bit of a poet himself.

As Mr. Birrell talked, I jotted down a few characteristic Birrellisms:

“Dr. Johnson would not willingly sit down to dinner with a man who had written more than he had read.”

“A man who neither reads nor writes is outside our magic circle.”

“The one and only good style is the style of honest men.”

“It is much easier to be an honest man than to write like one.”

“Words through the course of time have become soaked and saturated with humbug.”

“Not even a conscious rogue can get on without using honest words to conceal his nefarious designs.”

“Strong men are entitled to express, if the time be opportune, strong opinions strongly.”

“No Archbishop of Canterbury could ever be expected to read ‘Paradise Lost’ all through.”

People occasionally ask me who is my favourite author, and who has most influenced me in the literary world. I once heard the question put to a backwoodsman in the wild and woolly West. His interrogator, a “new chum,” made use of the question as a suitable means of demonstrating his superiority to the wild and woolly one. “Say, Mister,” drawled the untutored child of the West, “guess if you come askin’ any more of your fool questions round here, I’ll inffluence you with a shot-gun!”

But you cannot retort with a shot-gun on civilised beings who lure you out to dinner and, when they have charmed you by their hospitality, bring out their instruments of torture. “De-ar Mr. Burgin,” wrote one gushing enthusiast,

“ you who are so sweetly sympathetic and sympathetically sweet, surely you will send me the whole of your books for my Bazaar, with a little—just a teeney-weeney one—poem in each, and a few dozen autographs after your favourite quotations. We are trying to get our curate a new surplice, and I am sure you will not mind giving up a few hours to so worthy a purpose.” I replied that I was sadly in need of a few shirts myself, and that if she would organise a “ shirt bee ” on my behalf, I would send the books and the poems, and the quotations, and call it square. She wrote back that I “ had no true sympathy, and it was time that somebody put down the insufferable conceit of authors.”

But do the average man and woman agree or disagree with Mr. Birrell? Do books play such an important part in life as we fancy? Are authors necessities, or are they like the ice-putting at certain restaurants—luxuries thrown in for an extra sum?

So many people turn from a book to talk to other people. Is it not because they instinctively feel that in books the author only imagines his characters, whereas in real life the originals are always at hand? I am inclined to think that the reason why many people read books is because they can choose their society. Besides, Nature is so bad a dramatist that the action in real life generally drags. The things do not happen at the right time, or quickly enough, as they do in books. Hence, perhaps, we turn to books for the cohesion which is lacking in life. You know very well that little romance of your own did not happen in chapters—one chapter every twenty-four hours. Oh, no. Perhaps a year elapsed between the first chapter and the third; and the plot became a trifle wobbly until you met her again, and She began to take an interest in you. Then you switched off from side issues back to the main track, and felt that this time the affair was in earnest. If you had gone frivolling off like that in a book, you would have forfeited the reader's sympathy; but when you really did it as a matter of fact, people only shrugged their shoulders and said how natural it was.

Sometimes, however, Nature is as unintelligible as Carlyle when he appeared before a Commission to inquire into the management of the British Museum, of which the Duke of Somerset was chairman.

"I believe, Mr. Carlyle," he began, "that you make considerable use of this reading-room. Could you give us any suggestions for improving the arrangements?"

"My Lord," replied Carlyle, "the function of man is to go into Chaos and make it Kosmos."

"I think, Mr. Carlyle," said the Duke, "we will leave Chaos and Kosmos for the present, and perhaps you will be so good as to tell us whether, when you ask for a book, you get it."

The books of many novelists begin as Chaos before they are ultimately made into Kosmos.

Whatever you may do in real life, you must not be too natural in books. You have to "worry the plot through," and not go off on side issues. Hence, when we are tired of the muddles we get into, it is a relief to turn to books, where things will generally end up all right, because the British Public loves a happy ending, whether it be logical or illogical. I wrote a book myself some time ago, in which one man gave up the woman he loved because of his love for the other man. He made the other man supremely miserable; he made the woman miserable; and he made himself miserable. But still, it had to be done because he loved the other man. Now, I have had to write another book with the same people in it because I have received letters asking me to make the self-sacrificing man happy. I have made him happy; but I honestly believe that many people are happier in this world because they are unhappy than they would be if they had things all their own way.

The books which are real to us are those, with occasional exceptions, on which we have been brought up. A certain small boy, to wit myself, played truant from school one delicious summer afternoon. Of course, the morrow would bring punishment in its train, but, as I lay face downward

on the grass beneath an old tree in a neighbour's garden and prepared to read a book which I had taken from the library, to-morrow, with its inevitable five hundred lines of Virgil to write out in expiation of my crime, seemed very far away. Then I began to read "Zanoni," which, with its mystic atmosphere, more than a little confused my youthful mind. Some of its grandiloquent phrases were as incomprehensible to me as "that blessed word Mesopotamia." Still, I struggled drowsily on. A shadow glided across the grass as a rather tall, thin man came up to me, sat down and looked over my shoulder. "Hum," said the man in a surprised tone. "How are you getting on with it?" And he picked up "Zanoni." "Oh, I'm trying to fog it out," was my despondent reply; whereupon the stranger eloquently came to my assistance. Suddenly he stopped in the middle of a sonorous sentence. "It's harder than I thought," he said, "though I wrote it." He got up from the grass, nodded a smiling farewell, and went into the house.

In after life, it does not matter one whit how our critical judgment rebels against the thralldom of youthful association. We have been in the habit of loving certain books, and we must go on loving them to the end. Take, for instance, that literary outrage, "Sandford and Merton"! I dipped into it again the other day—an old, battered, dingy, dog-eared copy—wanted to kick Harry, apologise to Tommy for having thought him "a bad lot," and yearned to put "good Mr. Barlow" on a desert island with a handy cannibal to pull his wishbone with me. But I remembered the rapture of my first reading this egregious work, became once more the dreamy little idiot of youthful days, and, for the life of me, could not banish "Sandford and Merton" to the garret. It only goes to prove how much association has to do with the charm of books. I cannot read Herrick now with the old pleasure, because I once quoted him in the presence of a handsome girl at a Penny Reading, and she turned to her neighbour with the remark: "Eric? Who's 'e? Oh, I know, 'Eric, or Little by

Little.' " And I had expected, when she did open her mouth, that she would justify Herrick's poem :

So smooth, so sweet, so silv'ry is thy voice,
As, could they hear, the damned would make no noise,
But listen to thee, walking in thy chamber,
Melting melodious words to lutes of amber.

" Sandford and Merton " was written before the type-writer was invented, and when I mention the " writing of authors," I feel very like the hairdresser who explained that he did not mean " the 'air of the 'ead, but the hair of the hatmosphere "; in other words, I mean their calligraphy.

Not many modern authors could pass an examination in calligraphy before the L.C.C. Examiners. I should say that Mr. Harold Bindloss is easily last, for his handwriting is even worse than Sir James Barrie's. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, however, is an exception. If he were asleep, had his hands tied behind him, or wrote with his toes, or a pen in his mouth, nothing would disturb the beautiful legibility and regularity of his handwriting; whereas, on the other hand, if you were to buy Mr. Zangwill a brand new bottle of " the deepest dye," get him a nice fresh pen, and then await the results, those results would be rather like a page of Tolstoi's MS. You would wander from refreshment to labour, and from labour to more refreshments (liquid ones) before you could decipher the MS. The making of shoes did not tend to improve Tolstoi's handwriting; and the rapid flow of ideas on Mr. Zangwill's part does not tend to improve his handwriting.

I have been moved to these reflections after looking into Stocker's " Language of Handwriting," a find on a barrow in Whitechapel. Then I turned to the facsimile signatures in Morley's " English Literature in the Reign of Victoria." After a bewildering course of authors' signatures, I returned to my Stocker and went mad for a few days in my endeavours to master his theories. The trouble, of course, is that if you see a particular twirl or twiddle means " delicacy of mind," or " high aims," or

“cultured instincts,” although you never made that particular twirl before, you find yourself doing it instinctively. Then you score so many points, and go on to make a few more in the same way.

Sir Anthony Hope does not economise in ink. His writing is thick, forcible, and not always legible. One would have expected the author of “The Dolly Dialogues” to write an elegant Italian hand. Like an escaped convict, he does not seem to have any ambition to finish his sentence. “Wilkie Collins,” says my Stocker, “Charles Dickens, Thackeray, Sir Edwin Arnold, and Mr. W. S. Gilbert, all noted for sound and thorough workmanship, wrote, and write, exceedingly carefully constructed ‘hands.’”

I have before me a postcard written by the late Robert Barr. According to my studies in graphology, the level writing on this postcard would betoken an even, unemotional temperament, the loops to the “t’s” extreme gentleness of nature, and probably an utter incapacity on the part of the writer to stick up for himself or assert his just claims. His fine sense of humour, tempered by deliberation, is shown by the final strokes. What grieves me, however, is that there is no flourish to the signature. A man always gives himself away with his signature. My Stocker says, however, that “all flourishes denote some degree of egotistical feeling.” Now, if Robert Barr, when writing to me, had only put a curved line, beginning and terminating in a sort of looped hook, underneath his signature, I should have known that he had “a love of admiration, coquetry, often a love of flirtation, and generally self-complacence.” But he must have read up Stocker and carefully avoided giving me any hints as to his inner self.

In pursuance of my studies in graphology, I next turn to a letter from the late “Ghazi Alden Effendi, also Hadji and Bimbashi, and other things too numerous to mention.” I gather that this writer, from a long residence in the East, had imbibed the spirit of Oriental fatalism. The evenness of the lines betokens that he was not of a sanguine dis-

position, and a lack of the dot to the "i" is a serious matter. The English author will be rejoiced to hear that no letter out of the whole twenty-six is more significant than the small "i." Left undotted altogether, the "i" indicates "an untidy, heedless, slovenly person"!

It is always a little dangerous to discuss the "divine feminine"; but there is safety in numbers. "Dr." Arabella Kenealy's signature, according to Stocker, would indicate an absence of all "showfulness," as there is a complete lack of flourish of any kind about it. The first letter of "Arabella" betokens an unsophisticated, yet clear-minded, personality, and the last letter "loquacity." Now, though Dr. Kenealy is an admirable talker, I should hardly call her loquacious. "Rita's" signature indicates "a relative lack of the reflective faculties," but "presupposes a measurable preponderance of the perceptive group." Perhaps the largest feminine handwriting I have ever seen is that of Mrs. Marie Connor Leighton, the well-known novelist and serialist. According to the good Stocker, large handwriting shows "pride, high aspirations, generosity, large-heartedness, a disinclination to trouble about details, etc." There is a kind of bird's nest flourish below Mrs. Leighton's signature which "floors" me as a graphologist; but I rather think it means that she is going to head the record for "staying power" with regard to serials for the popular press.

Now I begin to understand why so many authors use a typewriter when communicating with their friends. It is "all along of" the letter "t." The letter "t" can be made to prove anything; everything is brought home to it. People talk about the bar of public opinion, but it is nothing when compared with the bar of the letter "t," and authors, who know what it means, not unreasonably fight shy of it. There is, however, no use for an author to try to "dodge" public opinion by leaving out the bar of so nefarious a letter. The gentle Stocker has foreseen this manœuvre on the part of unprincipled authors. "If," he says, with the precision of a judge sentencing a man to be

hanged—" If the bar is absent altogether, it indicates an acquiescent nature devoid of all force of character and with little, if any, of the resistive element in the composition." Whatever you do or say, that letter " t " will reveal you just as you are.

I could deal judicially with a dozen other authors of my acquaintance were it not for the unreasoning nature of the law of libel, and must confess that I approached " The Language of Handwriting " in a spirit of unbelief—a scoffing spirit. I scoff no more, but humbly worship at the shrine. By the aid of this invaluable work I have learned more about the habits and peculiarities of my literary friends in the course of a few weeks than I could otherwise have known in a century of painful and protracted study.

It is a far cry from Graphology to Clubs, although the continuous study of the former might lead to a painfully intimate acquaintance with the latter; but in my early days I belonged to a Club called " The Pythagorean." None of us had ever met Pythagoras, but we all had an idea that this name looked well on the Club paper. We were very literary; in fact, we all did something in what we imagined to be Literature. If by any chance we managed to lure a publisher within our sacred haunts, we spoke of literature with a capital " L." That frightened him and he asked us, in the most respectful manner, what were our services to Literature.

We told him that our motto on the Club paper was " One for all, and all for One." There was no jealousy in our Club. The man whose book was selling " beyond the dreams of avarice " (copyright phrase) was regarded with no more disrespect than that accorded to his humbler brother who ran a " shocker." We were absolutely equal.

The Club subscription was a very small one, and there was a big padlocked box in one corner of the Smoke Room, of which only the secretary had the key. This box produced more than the subscription list.

How was this?

Many of the men knew one another when they first came to London and "the stony-hearted mother," as De Quincey termed her (you may remember his lovely friendship with the poor street girl!) did not seem to be aware that we had called on her. Most of us were poor, but we all had ideals, faiths, hopes, ambitions, generous dreams, and impulses; the hot blood of youth surged in our veins. We met in obscure corners where food and drink were conveniently cheap, and when one had not enough for his daily meal the others helped him to get something to eat. We could eat anything then.

Of course, we all meant to be great. We said so openly, and, with arms flung round one another's necks, paced our crazy garrets, full of visions of fame. Two wise old rats who lived in one garret which I have in mind grew quite tame and shared our scanty crusts. They were our first audience, bribed to listen to us with bits of Dutch cheese and bread. Sometimes, hired mercenaries though they were, they could not sit out the reading of some particularly bad story, and disappeared quite silently into their holes as if they had not the heart to criticise us. "You'll excuse me, gentlemen," the old grey-whiskered one's manner implied—"You'll excuse me, gentlemen, but I've just remembered a pressing engagement, and my friend is forced to accompany me. Some other time we shall hope to have the plea——" Then he whisked into his hole, and we heard him groan as he went away. We always felt that if old Grey Whiskers could not stand a story, no editor would. A rat, mixing, as he does, in all kinds of society, knows a good deal more than we give him credit for, and I have often thought that if old Grey Whiskers could only have spoken—he could do nearly everything else—he would have saved most of us about five years' useless toil.

He could not speak, poor fellow, and, though we often pelted him and his somewhat shadowy friend, he put up with us for the sake of his board; but he earned it. Sometimes when I go to literary dinners and the waiter burbles down my neck: "'Ock or shumpine, sir?" I feel that

Grey Whiskers ought to be in my pocket and, as a reward for his former powers of endurance, be fed with the choicest morsels from the banquet. We did not then realise all that he had to put up with from us, and sometimes hit him in tender parts of his anatomy with bits of hard crust. He never said anything, though it pained him. Now it pains me to think of it. Perhaps he will be changed into an editor in the next Pythagorean world, and get even with us that way.

When we started "The Pythagorean" we solemnly agreed that every time a man was false to his literary conscience, every time he turned out "pot-boilers," every time he jested at things which ought to be held sacred, every time he failed to live up to the ideals of youth because living up to them meant dying of starvation—every time he did this, he was to put "conscience money" into the padlocked box. At the end of the year the box was opened by the secretary, and the money applied to the wants of our poorer members.

Of course, the amount to be put in the box was quite optional; it was a matter of conscience. We had no new members, and every year our list showed a slight decrease. Our annual banquet was held on the first of January. As Perpetual President, I took the chair and pronounced the funeral oration on departed members. Sometimes in the middle of it an odd thought flashed across my mind: Would the time ever come when,

The last leaf upon the bough,

I sat in that oaken chair without an audience!

I seemed to see an old man alone in a gorgeous room at a table laden with good fare. As the old man rose on tottering feet to pledge the comrades gone before, the hangings dropped from the walls, the padded chairs gave way to a couple of deal forms, the banquet vanished, there were no carpets on the floor, Grey Whiskers emerged from his hole, beautiful youths bestrode the forms, ale cup in hand, the wind whistled in the chimney as they buttoned their coats tighter to their throats and warmed their hands at the flickering candle stuck in an old gingerbeer bottle.

Then a wild shout made the rafters ring: "To our first loves, our first books, our first—CHEQUES!"*

Well, perhaps, after all, Pythagoras has been taking care of his own. Maybe, he counts

Life just a stuff
To try the soul's strength on, educe the man.
One sits down in poverty
And writes or paints, with pity for the
rich.

I had just finished these sapient Pythagorean musings when my cat jumped up to the typewriter and sat on them. His presence recalled to me another kind of cat not nearly so "chummy"—the Literary Cat.

I should like to think that the Literary Cat was "born in a garret, in a kitchen bred," but, unfortunately, she is not, or she would not have so many opportunities of doing mischief. She is an excrescence on modern literature of comparatively recent growth. Fortunately, she does not attain maturity quickly, or London would be overrun with her; but, as a matter of fact, she is a very serious evil and a great thorn in the flesh of sensitive persons.

Generally, she is a well-educated woman, who has had unhappy experiences of literary men. Either circumstances have been too much for them or they have been too much for her. As the years pass and her hopes of literary distinction become still remoter, the Literary Cat grows more spiteful. It is at this period of her venomous existence that, in a moment of misplaced confidence, some editor gives her the entrée to his pages. There, the Literary Cat is in her element. She creeps round like a feline ghoul seeking whom she may devour and thus avenge on the world in general the real or imaginary wrongs she has suffered at the hands of individual men and women.

Of course she is not an amiable individual. Her experiences have soured her; she finds it so much easier to be

* In an Encyclopædia recently issued by his enterprising firm, Lord Northcliffe recalls with great pride the receipt of his first cheque (for fifteen shillings, I think it was) from the editor of *The Hampstead and Highgate Express*.

nasty than to be pleasant. When she has the choice of saying a pleasant or an unpleasant thing she chooses the latter, quite irrespective of the anguish she may cause. Sometimes the Literary Cat attempts to write a book, and it does not succeed—vinegar and verjuice are so much cheaper at the ordinary commercial rates. Instead of ascribing her non-success to the demerits of the book and her own lack of human sweetness, the Literary Cat imagines that her failure is due to a widespread conspiracy on the part of everyone connected with literature. And so she mingles with literary people without their knowing that she takes the slightest interest in literature, wins their confidence, and makes use of the knowledge which she obtains by surreptitious means to pain and wound everyone with whom she comes in contact.

A very beautiful and gifted friend of mine once unconsciously offended a certain Literary Cat. This was some time ago, and in the columns of a particular journal for years past my unfortunate friend has been what is technically known as "slated" every time her new book comes out. She has been in the habit of meeting the editor and staff of this particular journal for years. They are all on the most friendly terms with her; but when one of her books appears she notices that any member of the staff of this journal disappears from her presence with startling celerity. Knowing many of these men intimately, she could not understand this persistent malignity on the part of their journal; but, of course, she was too proud to say anything about the matter, although the reviews in this paper always contrived to leave raw spots all over her. The writer of the reviews seemed to have some special knowledge of what would wound and grieve the author in her own estimation, and this foresight and penetration at last became so diabolical that my young friend almost made up her mind that she would either never write another book or publish her next one anonymously.

Still, everyone liked the girl, and it was with extreme reluctance that at last she set about the task of discover-

ing her relentless enemy. There was so much malignity in the " notices " that she felt sure they were not inspired by genuine literary motives. For a long time she could not make up her mind what to do in the matter. Then it suddenly occurred to her to consult a feminine friend, although it seemed a humiliating thing to mention the subject to anyone. At last, however, she put her pride in her pocket, and went to see the friend whom she had determined to consult. She had fixed upon this particular friend because she was a woman of the world and would probably give her sound advice. Besides, being unconnected with literature in any shape or form, her advice would be impartial.

When my friend arrived at the house of the impartial lady she was told that Mrs. De Kingsley Smith (we will call her Mrs. De Kingsley Smith, although that is not her real name) was engaged for ten minutes, but would be delighted to see her if she would wait in the writing room. So my friend was ushered into a cosy little writing room, and, sitting down in an armchair by the fire, gazed plaintively into its depths as she wondered why in this exquisite world some people are always worrying other people.

Growing tired of her reflections, the girl went to one of the dwarf bookcases and began to look at the dainty shelves. She was much struck by the number of the most recent novels which met her view. There seemed to be dozens of them. At last, to her great astonishment, she saw her own books—ten in all—neatly arranged in the order of their appearance. These books had the look of having been frequently consulted, and when the girl opened one of them and absent-mindedly turned over the pages she came to a passage which was deeply scored with pencil. The book remained open at this passage of its own accord.

She was touched and interested by this proof of her friend's affection. It is seldom that we take the trouble to skim the novels of our friends; it is so much easier to read those of our enemies and say unpleasant things about them; but in this particular instance the book had

evidently been well read, and the gratified author of it began to read the marked passage with great interest. She remembered that this passage had been garbled in the review, which annoyed her—garbled to such an extent that this particular critique had far outweighed the generous measure of praise accorded to her by others. Then she started back with a little cry of astonishment. There was the garbled passage on the margin of the book in the well-known handwriting of her friend!

The girl shut the book with a snap and walked back to the fireplace. Had she a right to pursue her investigations? Wounded feeling conquered, and she returned to the bookcase, took out her books one after the other, and found that they were all review copies, marked with the stamp of the journal which had pursued her with such malignity for the last five years.

Here were the footprints of the Literary Cat. Then the door opened softly, and the Literary Cat, clad in her most becoming fur, came into the room.

The Literary Cat scented danger, and turned instinctively from her friend to the book which the latter still held in her hand. She realised at once that the situation was a difficult one. "You wanted to see me, dearest?" she purred. "I did want to see you very badly," said the girl. "On second thoughts I wish never to see you again." The Literary Cat saw that she was discovered, and threw off the mask. "You do not appreciate my poor little critical efforts," she snarled.

"Oh, yes, I do," said the girl. "But I am not thinking of the injury you have done me. I am only sorry that anyone could be so base. I have often wondered at the bitterness with which some men speak of women. If men meet many women like you I wonder no longer." Then she went away, and left the Literary Cat wishing that she had not been so foolish as to ask the girl to wait in her writing room.

It would be a very much more comfortable thing for society in general if the Literary Cat could be labelled. This would cut her claws. The insidious treachery of the

Literary Cat makes her formidable; and if she has a grudge to wreak against some innocent victim who has never done her any harm, she is able to do it under such specious guise that the victim does not know the hand which smites her until some happy accident reveals the truth. If the Literary Cat could be drowned when a kitten, before her eyes are opened, it would save her and the world a good deal of trouble, for, though "her mouth is smoother than oil," her tongue is "bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword."

But to turn to pleasanter things. Did you ever hear of a literary typist?

Once upon a time a man wrote "The Song of the Shirt." It was a good song, and people said so—a song which set forth the tragedy of a woman's working for others and the inability of her keeping body and soul together on the wage she gained. Moved by the pathos of this song someone set to work to alleviate the condition of the wretched shirtmaker, and invented a sewing machine. "Now," said the inventor, "we shall see."

We did.

When the School Board public became literary, editors of weekly and monthly periodicals were inundated with illegible MSS. It became costly work to go through the MSS. Consequently they were returned to the writers with or without thanks; mostly without. "Oh," sighed the wearied editor, "when will someone devise a means by which a story can be put before me so that I can see at a glance what it is all about, how it is written, and whether there is anything in it?"

Someone whispered to the weary editor that in a far-off land, discovered by Christopher Columbus, might be found a machine called the typewriter; but for some years the editor, with characteristic Anglo-Saxon caution, refused to believe it. When the agent for the typewriter came along the editor told him to "get out." But the agent "guessed he'd come to stay"; and stay he did.

In a few years authors began either to use typewriters or to have their "copy" typewritten. "I don't like these

newfangled machines," said one fair writer to me. "In the old days, when I wasn't quite sure of my spelling, I could always make a blot on the word and get off that way. Now I have to look out words in the dictionary, and it wastes time."

Women found that it amused them to "play on the typewriter"; it was so much more remunerative than giving lessons on the piano. Brisk, energetic girls rented a room in the neighbourhood of Fleet Street, put up a sign, and announced that they were prepared to copy authors' MSS. at so much a thousand words.

Authors began to make "copy" out of the typewriter girls, so did the playwrights. My friend, the late Grant Allen, anonymously wrote a charming novel ("The Typewriter Girl"), in which he depicted the heroine as a typewriter girl. She had a very good time of it, mostly owing to the fact that her employers always fell in love with her.

Grant Allen was very much surprised that people should have so bitterly resented his "hill-top" novel. Directly he had time he set to work to make another literary reputation as "Olive Pratt Rayner," and wrote "The Typewriter Girl" and "Rosalba." I think it was the latter book which he dedicated to "his kind friends the critics, whose encouragement had led him to make a second attempt." Possessed of an infinite knowledge of men and things, a shrewd wit, a travelled gentleman, a devoted husband, and tender father, Grant Allen, handicapped by a delicate constitution, had "a hard row to hoe," but he hoed it long after any other man would have given up the attempt in despair. Towards the end of his life he let some of his friends into the secret that he was the author of "The Typewriter Girl." It amused him very much to write to the publishers in his assumed character; but one day he wrote a whimsical letter to a friend at the publisher's, on his own headed notepaper, which, to use his own expression, "gave the show away." "I don't know," he said, writing as Olive Pratt Rayner, "that I feel sufficiently satisfied with the as yet modest success of

'The Typewriter Girl' to care about writing another novel at present. You see, I am a busy woman, and have to earn my living. I am not sure that it will not pay me better to go on cultivating my vineyard at Verona than to make any further attempts at literature. Still, I will not yet decide, but will see a little later, after bottling the vintage, what seems to me most advisable. By the way, I didn't mean to use this paper; it rather gives the show away; still, I will sign myself none the less,

"Yours very sincerely,

"Olive Pratt Rayner."

Olive Pratt Rayner was supposed to be an American lady who cultivated a vineyard at Verona. Many of the critics patted "her" on the back as a very promising beginner.

In the beginning of typewriting things a good worker could easily make a couple of pounds a week. Then competition came in, the inexorable law of supply and demand began to work; the girls who had begun by copying MSS. at a shilling a thousand words dropped down to elevenpence, to tenpence, to ninepence. Now, prices have gone up again, but not enough to meet the increased cost of living.

Instead of being happy and comfortable, the typewriter girl, like the rest of us, now has a hard struggle to pay her way. She will not understand the immorality of cutting prices. If an alleged man comes to her and says he can get his work done for tenpence a thousand words, she volunteers to do it for ninepence, without in the least realising that she is practically cutting her own throat as well as that of her neighbour.

If the first girls who started typewriting in London had combined into a little society, had fixed their uniform price, and had made a solemn compact to stick to it, things might have been better. They could have paid a small annual subscription to a secretary to go round to all the other girls and secure their adherence. In fact, they ought to have formed a trade union on a small scale. Being women, it never occurred to them to do anything of the sort. Con-

sequently, many of them muddle along from hand to mouth, and gradually fit themselves for "The Song of the Typewriter."

I was talking to a typewriter girl who is going to be married to an author. He cannot afford a private secretary at a salary, so she intends to combine the functions of secretary and wife. He will thus ensure the prompt delivery of his MSS., and, whilst she is "typing," attend to the cookery department himself. If she survives his cooking, he promises to endure the click-clack of her typewriter.

"I've fifteen books coming out this season," said another typewriter girl to me a few days ago. "Fif—! I didn't know you wrote books," I said in amazement. "Oh, no," she declared, toying nonchalantly with a piece of indiarubber. "I don't exactly write them, but only correct the spelling, supply the punctuation, put in the paragraphing, point out to the authors where they have got mixed up in their heroines' complexions, keep a general eye on the plots, and make a few suggestions when the story hangs fire. One man sometimes sends me an outline for a 'pot-boiler,' and tells me to fill it up as I go along, and he'll pay a penny a thousand more for it. I insisted on twopence extra, and he grumbled; but I carried my point.

"Now I am doing 'pot-boilers' on my own account, and make a fair living at it. Copying MSS. is a splendid training if a girl has any brains."

Another typewriting girl tells me that she has a small "curtain-raiser" accepted by a London manager. She copies plays for authors, and from constantly typing MSS. for plays began to see how they were written. So she wrote one.

But, of course, this is a new danger for authors. Still, if a typewriter girl has brains enough to learn how to write in this way, I do not think that the authors need grumble. And nowadays no authors stand a chance of getting their stories read by an editor who knows his business unless they are typewritten.

Though the typewriter machine is a boon and a blessing to authors, it has one drawback—it cannot spell.

In the meantime, I appeal to all authors who employ typewriting girls never to pay them less than a decent rate. So shall they (the decent section) hereafter escape everlasting perdition. It is a wicked and a devilish thing to “sweat” a fellow-creature, to rob her of her youthful bloom, and turn her into a cadaverous feminine wreck. I appeal more particularly to my brother authors, who, in the main, are good-natured and sympathetic, for their own struggles make them realise how hard it is to keep the wolf from the door. Some of them have only succeeded in doing this by reading their own stories to the aforesaid wolf.

CHAPTER V.

SOME DISCONNECTED ANECDOTES

IN the early days of my association with *The Idler*, I had the pleasure of meeting Martin Anderson, otherwise "Cynicus," the caricaturist and satirist. He had abandoned his native Scotland to take London by storm, and, indeed, achieved no inconsiderable success. Who does not remember his loathsome but powerful *Transit of Venus*, a drunken woman being carried off on a stretcher by two policemen and addressing frantic objurgations to them as she went? "Cynicus" was the soul of good-nature, and on hearing of my approaching marriage confided to me that he was going to present me with a really great picture which he proposed to paint for that memorable occasion. From time to time he dropped in to tell me how the picture was getting on, and at length took me to his studio in Drury Lane (it had once been a fried fish shop, and the odours of the past still clung to it). "It's a picture of a chamois on its native mountain top," he explained, as he proudly drew aside the curtain which hid this great work from the vulgar gaze. The body may have been that of a chamois, but the horns were the antlers of a public-house signboard stag. On another occasion he confided to me that he had two wealthy old aunts in England who had never taken the slightest notice of him. One day he found himself in the village where they lived, and saw them coming toward him in an open carriage drawn by a pair of fat horses. "And I said to myself," he continued, "when I was poor and unknown these women took no notice of

me. Now that I am really great, shall I show my magnanimity by bowing to them, or shall I not? I cut them dead."

"Cynicus's" fish shop reminds me of the horrible smells proceeding from Shackleton's old whaler, *The Fram*, when she was moored off the Embankment for show purposes. Holding her handkerchief to her nose, one fashionably dressed woman staggered up on deck, and said to another fashionably dressed woman also staggering up: "Now I know Shackleton's a hero. Anyone who could stand that smell for more than a couple of minutes must be one."

I was once taken fishing by a little girl of ten, the daughter of a Canadian literary friend, and sought to improve the occasion by saying: "You know, Dr. Johnson says that when a man goes fishing there's a worm at one end of the rod and a fool at the other." "Well," said she roguishly, "I guess you're not the worm."

In my rooms at Featherstone Buildings, Holborn, I was waited upon by a diminutive, half-starved London "slavey." One night I had gone to bed early, and was roused from my slumbers by two men stumbling into the room with a coffin. "Beg pardon, guv'nor," said one of them. "We've made a mistake; it's the top floor." On inquiring what it meant the next morning, the slavey informed me that my landlord was dead, and that on the previous evening, in order properly to celebrate the sad occasion, she had had the supper of her life with the widow. After the landlord's funeral there were no more free suppers, and the poor little slavey grew thinner than ever. I met her painfully crawling up the stairs with a big pail of water one morning. "I suppose you miss those suppers?" I said. She sadly wiped her eyes. "And you won't get any more till someone else dies?" "No, sir. No." Then a smile irradiated her grimy little face. "No, sir. No. But," hopefully, "missis ain't very well, sir. Got a nasty cough. So I'm leaving her window open o' nights."

One night I received an invitation to dine at the Huguenot Hospital, a little way out of town. The hospital, a retreat for "decayed old men and women," was some distance

from the station. The night grew dark, and I hailed a passing 'bus.

The driver pulled up. "Can't take you *this* time, sir. You ain't ready for me yet."

It was a hearse.

On my recent Dutch holiday a girl in a certain village near my host's farm was known to walk in her sleep, and the village idiot said that he had a splendid way to cure her of this dangerous habit. Every night the girl walked in her sleep over a bridge which spanned a deep stream. The day after the village idiot had announced his intention to cure the girl, her dead body was picked up two miles below the bridge, and he rubbed his hands delightedly. "Isn't it a splendid cure?" he asked the assembled villagers. "Cure!" said they. "But the poor girl's dead. What have you done to her?" "I sawed the planks of the bridge apart, and she fell through the hole. She'll never walk in her sleep again."

As a small boy, I also had a habit of walking in my sleep, and one night came down to the dining-room, where the family were at supper. They woke me up and gave me a very good supper. The next night I went down with my eyes shut, but my eldest brother smelt a rat. "Are you asleep?" he asked quietly. "Yes," said I, falling into the trap, and the next moment there was a streak of night-shirted boy speeding up the stairs pursued by slippers, cushions, and a loaf of bread, which caught him in that portion of his frame which Ingoldsby says it is equally rude to expose to a friend or an enemy.

My widow servant had a small boy of five named Danny. On one occasion his mother was sweeping the stairs, and told him to fetch a brush she wanted. "Shan't!" said Danny. Whereupon he was admonished and told that it was his duty to be polite and grow up to be a great big strong man to help mother. The next day the same thing happened. "Shan't," said Danny; "I'm busy." "What about?" I asked, coming out of my den. "Busy growin' up to be a great big strong man to help mother," retorted Danny.

Another old servant was one day sent out on an errand when it was raining. "Haven't you a mackintosh?" someone asked. "Can't afford it," said Jane. "I'm saving up for a rainy day."

One day Gilbert, of Gilbert and Sullivan fame, was talking to some friends at "The Garrick," and the eternal discussion came up as to who wrote Shakespeare. "I'll tell you how to prove the authorship of the plays," said Gilbert. "If Tree recited Hamlet at the graves of Bacon and Shakespeare, the one who turned in his grave would be the author of the plays."

Coventry Patmore, the poet author of *The Angel in the House*, was very much the reverse of an angel in his own dwelling. His son, Tennyson Patmore, married a very beautiful girl, and the young couple came to stay with his father. Coventry Patmore had a great weakness for wood fires, and, after his daughter-in-law had been in the house for half an hour, peremptorily ordered her to go to the wood box in the hall and get some wood for the fire.

The girl went out of the room, put on her outdoor things, and sent for a cab. "Either you apologise, or I leave this house," she said quietly. He apologised.

It is so long ago since *The Angel in the House* appeared that people do not seem to have heard of, I believe, Swinburne's parody. In *The Angel*, Patmore relates with exquisite delicacy an incident where the young bridegroom sees his wife's shoestring unfastened and is too shy to tie it for her. In the parody the husband is presented with a son, and, on being informed of it by the nurse, hesitates on the threshold of his wife's room. Then the young mother's voice is heard happily exclaiming: "Confound your modesty. Come in."

I have heard many ill-natured things said about Bernard Shaw, and so I should like to tell a story which shows him in a very amiable light. I once wrote to ask him to contribute a short article to *The Idler* magazine, and he wrote back: "I don't need the money, but — does. Why not ask him instead?"

Archibald Forbes came in to see us one day about an article he wished to write for *The Idler*. Jerome arranged it with him, and in due course the article appeared. The day after its appearance we were astonished to receive a letter from Cassells saying that we had stolen the article, which had already appeared in book form, and that the copyright belonged to them. "Take them up the file and show them Forbes' receipt for the money," said Jerome indignantly.

I went to Cassells, was received by an editor very much after the manner of a judge preparing to put on the black cap, and produced the receipt. He said nothing, but handed me a letter from Archibald Forbes denouncing *The Idler* for having stolen his article. "We will consider Cassells' letter cancelled and apologise," said the man with the black cap manner. "Forbes must be losing his memory."

When my American friend, W. L. Alden, the humorist, came to live in England, he was sadly bothered by a local Income Tax Collector, who worried his life out. At last, in despair, he wrote to the Tax Collector: "Dear Sir,—If you will kindly pay my Income Tax for me, I will cheerfully make you a present of my income." A response came back: "Dear Sir,—In reply to yours of the tenth inst., I regret that there is no precedent which enables me to comply with your request." Alden's answer was: "Dear Sir,—Are you a — fool or a brother humorist?" The Tax Collector rejoined: "Dear Sir and Brother,—We are both fools and—humorists."

I was once chatting with young David Carnegie, who had written a very entertaining book about his adventures in the great Australian Desert, called "Spinnifex and Sand" (he was afterwards speared by the natives in Nigeria, poor fellow), and he told me that he had to leave out the best story from his book because he was informed that "Exeter Hall" would howl about it at May Meetings. For three days his party had been without water in the desert, and the "black fellows" (natives) hung round waiting to see them die of thirst and plunder their belongings. "And

what did you do?" I asked. His eyes twinkled. "They used to come prowling about the camp at night, so I caught one, tied him up, and gave him an enormous tin of bully beef in which I had dropped a lot of cayenne pepper. He was so delighted that he made signs for another tin. I gave him another, with more cayenne in it. The next morning his tongue hung out and he wanted water. 'Haven't any,' I said. 'Unless you lead us to a water hole, you'll stop here and die of thirst.' He held out for twenty-four hours; but the cayenne pepper got in its work, and he led us to a water hole, or I shouldn't be here now."

A few days before he took to his bed I met in Fleet Street the late Walter Emanuel, the gifted writer of "Charivari." I did not then know that he was afflicted with a mortal disease and could not live long. He knew it, however, and lingered chatting with me as if, so I afterwards thought, aware that we should never meet again. Something cropped up about murders, and he said that he had once been to Brighton. The train stopped for a couple of minutes outside a station, and when Emanuel poked his Mephistophelian-like head out of the window two boys sitting on a fence gazed at him admiringly. Emanuel's portrait had appeared in an important paper a few days before, "and," said Emanuel, "thinking that this was a tribute to my popularity on the part of the two boys, I prolonged my stare out of the carriage window. The train started, I majestically waved my hand to the two boys on the fence, and they said in awestruck voices: "Good-bye, Crippen." *

If you do not wish a story to be repeated, never tell it to anyone. I told one, in confidence, to a friend, and heard it again at a public dinner some time ago. It really happened in a little Ottawa village. There was a very thin and very pious woman who was so emaciated that people said she could slip through a keyhole. When she died her husband chose the words "Lord, she was thine," to be

* Crippen was the first murderer who was tracked by Marconi's "Wireless"

put on her tombstone. The village mason had no room for the last letter, and when the sorrow-stricken husband went up to the churchyard he found: "Lord, she *was* thin!"

A certain well-known sculptor was very proud of his handsome daughter, who had just begun her career on the stage. "Have you heard the news?" he asked me at lunch one day, trembling with excitement. "No, what's the matter?" "My daughter has secured a most important engagement with Tree." "I congratulate you and her. Has she much to say?" "Oh," said the proud parent, "she hasn't anything to say, but she has to walk across the stage at a most critical moment in the play."

Some little time ago there was an outcry in regard to the cruelty used to performing animals. A great point was made at the inquiry on this subject about the elephants which slid down an inclined plane at the Hippodrome. I was at the Hippodrome one evening, and sat next to a little girl, who gazed at the sliding elephants with rapture. "Oh, Daddy," she whispered, "do they grease the planks or the elephants?"

There was also a dog at the Hippodrome who climbed up to the roof of the building and then dropped into a blanket below. After the show I was talking to the trainer of this dog, and he explained that the dog had taught himself the trick. One day the trainer had been out for a walk in New York, and his dogs were left in a room at the top of a lofty building with the window open. As he returned he saw this particular dog looking at him from the window. He thoughtlessly whistled, and the dog, who was utterly fearless, immediately launched himself through the window. Fortunately, he caught the dog as it fell, and had no trouble whatever in teaching him the Hippodrome trick. I am rather surprised that my friend Mr. Bensusan was not called at the meetings of the Commission, for some years ago he patiently investigated the methods of animal trainers, and was appalled at the cruelties practised by many of them.

One Saturday afternoon I was taking tea with an elderly couple, who were members of the Society of Friends. We

had tea in the garden under a widely-spreading plum tree. "Frederick," said the old lady to her husband, "I have a desire for some of that fruit. Climb up into the branches and get it for me." "But it is an old tree and the branches are rotten, Rachel," ruefully protested Frederick. "I have a desire for that fruit, Frederick. If thee art a good husband thee will procure it for me," firmly declared the old lady, so I helped the unwilling Frederick to shin up the plum tree. "Thee must get further out, Frederick," the old lady directed. "The plums I have a desire for are at the end of the branch."

Frederick reluctantly got further out, reached for the plums, secured them, the branch broke, and he came down in a sitting posture on the sharp edge of a fractured flower-pot. "I would thank thee for the plums, Frederick," said the old lady, "had I not heard thee utter a profane word."

In the early days of the Friends' settlements in America they were so respected by the Indians that, although the neighbouring farms were burnt and the occupants scalped, the Indians never touched their dwellings. One day, however, a Friend lost his nerve, and took a gun with him when he went ploughing. Whereupon the Indians promptly shot and scalped him.

A wandering American pedlar, with a sackful of clocks, went into a Friends' meeting house, where they were all assembled in the beauty and spiritual absorption of Friends' worship, and dropped his sack of clocks on the floor with a bang. The clocks immediately began to strike, and, between them, got up to one hundred and forty. An old minister rose and, solemnly addressing the pedlar, said, "Friend, since it is so late, and thee art interrupting our meditations, thee had better continue thy journey."

Just a few legal stories.

The Old Bailey was full of exasperating echoes, and a prisoner who had been sentenced to seven years thus addressed the judge: "I beg pardon, your lordship, would you mind repeating it? I've heard seven years on my

right and seven years on my left. All I hope, my lord, is this—that the sentences are concurrent.”

Mr. Newton Crane once told me the story of a plan of a house where a negro was being tried for burglary. The young barrister who defended him was rather surprised that the negro was convicted, but understood the reason afterwards when the plan which he had handed up to the jury was returned to him. In a moment of forgetfulness, and for his own guidance, he had marked on the plan, “Here’s where the nigger got in.”

The late Sir Frank Lockwood defended a man accused of swindling, and, in an eloquent peroration, drew a picture of his client as an angel of light. The client insisted on shaking hands with him. “When,” he said, “my solicitor told me what he was paying you I grumbled, but as soon as I heard your speech I knew that the money was well spent, and I apologise. Your talk about me has done me good. I haven’t experienced such self-respect for many years, and it’s worth the money.” “Oh, that’s all right,” said Sir Frank genially; “but you take my advice and go out of court. Sir Edward Clarke, on the other side, is just getting up.”

Lord Reading, during a dinner at which I was present, gave some illustrations of a witness who had been called in to support a case where a will was disputed. An eccentric old lady had died, and it was sought to prove that she was suffering from delusions when she made her will. In going through her papers he had come across the words, “Sarah suffers from animals under the skin.” This seemed to prove that the old lady had delusions, but when Sarah was examined it turned out that what she called animals under the skin meant eczema. In another memorandum the deceased had written, “Sarah considers pickled onions good for her cough.” When Sarah was cross-examined on this subject she explained that her mistress was very mean, and that she herself was fond of pickled onions, so in order to get the pickled onions she pleaded that they always did her cough good.

From the Law to the Church.

The pious gamekeeper watched a Bishop knock out the tail feathers of a magnificent cock pheasant. "Did I miss him?" anxiously inquired the Bishop.

"Oh, no. You only reminded him of his latter end, your 'Oliness,'" replied the gamekeeper.

Among the dearest of my friends, and the one whose untimely death I most deplore, was "Tommy" (no one ever called him "Thomas") Gallon. When I think of the heroic life he led, his constant struggles against illness, and the amazing quantity of work he produced in the shape of novels, plays, and articles, I am filled with the profoundest admiration. At an early age he was left to his own resources, and was consumed by the ambition to write. He had all sorts of ups and downs, at first mostly "downs," but after he had written "Tatterley" his fortunes began to mend. He could write a thrilling serial in an incredibly short time as he paced up and down his study and dictated it to that accomplished sister who is now so ably following in his footsteps. At one time he actually wrote the whole of a cheap weekly periodical, short story, serial, editorial notes; but I think even his pluck failed him at the prospect of doing "Aunt Jane's Cookery and Costume Column." He never allowed anything to interfere with his work. Nothing delighted him so much as the success of a friend. The only time I ever knew him to be thoroughly upset was when he had been commissioned to write a long story for a firm, and in the middle of it a certain editor wanted him to throw up the contract because he did not like a few truthful passages in the story about low life. "What did you do, Tommy?" I asked. "Oh, nothing much," said Tommy. "Nothing much. I just went down to his office, shut the door, and cursed him till he burst into tears."

I saw him a few days before he died. A little, wasted, white-faced, pathetic figure, his voice reduced to a whisper, unable to move, his beautiful eyes already dimmed by the shadows of approaching dissolution. But he had been ill so often that I did not in the least realise that his end was near. Somehow, one never does; and

then come the bitter, unavailing after-regrets that one did not do more to help him on that last sad journey which we must all take alone.

It is late (he once wrote to me), and I have just read through your book—. I even laughed again (once you had me thawed) and again. It is good to smile, to laugh, to be born again into the fairy land you create. You almost persuade me that your land is real and your people actual; there are moods in which I think they are real; there are, of course, mean, and cruel, and loathly people by millions in the world, but to-night I feel that even the worst of people are the slaves of their surroundings and of their inherited qualities—that the bad are to be pitied (even if, as must be, I reserve the right to smash them over the head when they endanger their betters), and that the weak are to be helped and forgiven seventy times seven—as the best of us needs pity and forgiveness, seventy times a day and more.

We were “yarning” one night, when he suddenly began to laugh. “Did I ever tell you the tragic story of the house I once let?”

“Never.”

“Well, it was this way. My sister and I had been living in a little country village, and got to know everybody, especially the Vicar, who was an awfully decent chap. When we wanted to come to Town again I let the house to a young couple (they seemed to me newly married), and, thinking they might be lonely, gave them letters of introduction to the principal folks in the village, of course including the Vicar. Then I forgot all about them until one day I received a reproachful and indignant, why-have-you-thus-smitten-me-under-the-fifth-rib kind of letter from the Vicar. He said he had made the appalling discovery that the young couple were not married. Of course I humbly apologised, and said that when letting them the house I hadn't thought of asking them to produce their marriage certificate. About a year later my sister and I were in the stalls of a certain theatre, and discovered the identical young couple a few seats away. When the girl saw us she elaborately took off her left-hand glove, and held up her hand to her face, so that we might see the wedding ring on her finger. My sister went out first after the performance, and the girl slowly passed me.

'It's all right now,' she said in a stage whisper; 'and if the baby's a boy we're going to call him after you.' "

There was a dear old classical master at the preparatory school which had the honour of receiving me some fifty years ago. He was also an amateur farmer, and, when we were called up to construe, always sat by the classroom window, so that he could keep one eye on each flock. This was the sort of thing, in the intervals of construing: "You, Smee Minor, there's a lamb got his head fixed in the gate. Run round and pull it out and I'll let you off that flogging I owe you." One morning he stopped the Virgil class and asked if we had noticed anything wrong with his pigs. "Those pigs of yours aren't happy, sir," said a small boy, whose father was a farmer. "They've nothing to play with." "Indeed," sneered the headmaster, "how would you minister to their welfare?" "If you take my advice, sir," said the small boy, "you'll turn them into the straw-yard and upset two or three bushels of peas in the straw. They'll go routing about for those peas all day and get as fat as butter." And the headmaster was so struck with this reasoning that he promoted the small boy on the spot with the title of "Honorary Pig Inspector, with Power to Report."

In November of last year my nephew, Dr. Leslie Burgin, was contesting Hornsey as a Liberal Independent. His opponent was Viscount Ednam. Many of the houses in Hornsey were divided into flats, and, on the polling day, one voter displayed my nephew's colours on the ground floor, another put out "Vote for Ednam" on the top floor, and a pessimist on the middle floor displayed a huge stencilled plate with the inscription, "Vote for neither of them."

"Sir," said a he-looking female as I entered a railway station one Sunday afternoon, "you are a well-known literary character. Will you swear, by God's help, never to travel on Sundays?" "I will not swear," I said, edging toward the booking office. "I believe you are only a journalist after all," she said bitterly. "Madam," I returned, "here are the cards of half-a-dozen journalistic

friends. When they see you, I am sure they will all swear." She thanked me and apologised.

A man went into the shop of a Jew clothes' dealer in New York and wanted a coat and waistcoat. He tried them on and bolted with them. The Jew ran into the shop of his neighbour, a gunsmith, and asked him to fire at the flying thief. The gunsmith took aim at the latter's retreating figure. "Shoot him in the pants," the Jew called out; "the coat and the vest is mine."

"Wish you'd keep your infernal cat away," said a gardener to the cat owner next door. "Impossible," said the cat owner, "but you may do what you like with her if she comes over your wall." Some days later the gardener met the owner of the cat. "I've settled your old tabby; I've cut her tail off." "Oh, you don't know my cat. 'A trifle like that won't stop her.'" "I think it will," said the gardener. "I think it will. I cut it off—at the neck!"

A friend of mine went to a reception in New York, and was much amused by the black servant's dexterity with the guests' coats and hats. The servant disdained to give tickets to anyone. When my friend came out, the negro handed him his hat. "How did you know that was my hat?" asked my friend. "I don't know dat's your hat, sar," replied the jetty one; "all I know is dat's de hat you give me."

CHAPTER VI.

THE COMING OF KIPLING

IF you turn to the biographical dictionaries with reference to Rudyard Kipling,* you will find absolutely nothing in the few bare facts which they record to show what a wonderful man he is. Most people are under the impression that he is of any age between forty and fifty. As a matter of fact, he was born in December, 1865. One day, without any preliminary warning, there bursts upon the Universe, in the eulogistic pages of *The World*, a young man who has just come from India with a sheaf of articles and stories. At that time no one in England cared particularly about India. It was just one of our far-away possessions where we kept several millions of dusky natives in dutiful subjection (it is more than can be said of them now), assisted in that good work by various beasts of the jungle and snakes. We were not very interested in either the snakes or the tigers, provided they kept up their average of slaughter in the Indian statistics. But with the coming of Kipling all this was altered, and the peculiarity of his Christian name helped to focus people's attention on him. "What," asked one old lady in the train of another old lady in the train, "is this stuff called Rudyard Kipling that I see placarded about so much?" "I don't know, my dear," placidly returned the other old lady, "but I rather think it's a kindred preparation to Hunyadi János—a sort of mineral water, don't you know."

This lack of knowledge on the part of the public was soon remedied, for people began to chant the "Departmental

* Tennyson wrote to Rudyard Kipling, praising one of his poems. Kipling wrote back: "When a private in the ranks is praised by the general he does not presume to thank him, but fights better the next day."

Ditties," or tell each other "Plain Tales from the Hills," as the "Soldiers Three," dressed in "Black and White," sat "Under the Deodars" waiting for the coming of "The Phantom Rickshaw," and "Wee Willie Winkie" joined them with "The Light that Failed." When "The Story of the Gadsbys" became lost in "Life's Handicap" they listened to "Many Inventions" in "Barrack Room Ballads," "The Jungle Book," and "Captains Courageous," or finished up "The Day's Work" in "The Seven Seas." To adopt the old-fashioned Christy Minstrel way of enumerating an author's works (the jingle helps to fix the titles in one's memory), the above is a partial list of Kipling's writings. Later came that enchanting book, "Kim" (I must have read it with untiring delight at least twenty times), numberless short stories, and more poems and ballads.

Emerson says that when there is something to be done the world knows how to get it done; that the world throws its life into a hero or a shepherd or a soldier or an author, and puts him where he is wanted. Kipling is editing a paper in India. Fate sends him here and there about the world to qualify for the work he has to do. When he is fit for it—when he has hobnobbed with senator and savage, and seen what manner of world it is—Fate packs his portmanteau, gives him a pat on the shoulder, and says: "Young man, go to London, the marvellous city, and tell there all that you have seen and heard; draw the sons of this vast English Empire together as never man drew them before; show them how to stand shoulder to shoulder, fire them with the love of country, the heroism of self-sacrifice; teach them to know one another, so that when the great struggle comes for the supremacy of the world, as come it must, you will be able to do your appointed work."

Then the young man comes to England, and the rest is known to the world.

What manner of man is he, this author to whom in the days of his comparative youth the late Sir Walter Besant and many an older writer at once tendered the palm of supremacy and helped to make known?

In person, he is of medium height, with rather broad shoulders, black or dark brown hair parted high up on the left-hand side, broad, projecting forehead, thick eyebrows almost meeting, rather large straight nose, with a deep curve from the base of the nostrils to the corners of the mouth, heavy moustache, and a square chin cleft apart by a kind of vertical valley. His eyes, generally hidden behind spectacles, are deep-set, penetrating, with a humorous twinkle. His clothes? Whatever happens to come to hand. His manner? Full of nervous energy and force. A kind of wireless telegraphy appears to concentrate itself upon him from the air. He is full of ideas, seldom for a moment in one place. You talk to him—his chair is empty; you look for him in another chair—he is perched restlessly on the end of the sofa or pacing up and down the room, flinging out suggestions, humorous fancies, anecdotes, jokes, cryptic utterances. Then comes the brooding melancholy of thought. He is thousands of miles away until something lifts the veil and brings him back with equal speed.

As a matter of fact, there are about fifteen or twenty men in Rudyard Kipling. Ask the man in the street: "How do you like Kipling?" "Hate him," growls the man in the street. "Bumptious brute wouldn't speak to me last time I saw him." You meet other men and repeat the question. "Like!" they echo. "We don't like—we *love* him." Kipling's individuality is so strong that it cannot adopt half measures. Either a man interests him or he doesn't. If the latter, as far as Kipling is concerned, that man ceases to exist. Why, when the world is so full of interesting people, should he waste the few moments of life on its bores! Let them bore one another. Genius such as Kipling's has its Fate-appointed tasks to perform, and cannot lavish on commonplace people time which should be spent in writing.

I once heard an anecdote about Rudyard Kipling which shows him in yet another phase. A young American married lady came to stay with Mr. and Mrs. Kipling. Important business had brought her to England, and

necessitated the leaving in America her two little girls, from whom she had never been parted since they first drew the breath of life. She arrived at the Kiplings' house thinking of her children and longing to be with them. Someone handed her a cablegram saying that the children were well, and relieved tears rose to her eyes. Kipling saw them, and at once applied a remedy which showed his greatness of heart and sympathy. He turned to his wife. "Take Mrs. — up to the nursery and show her the children. What she wants is baby talk."

It is said that Shakespeare knew everything instinctively. When Rudyard Kipling wants to know anything, he sets to work to find out all about it. Take, for instance, a story of his called "The Ship that Found Herself"—*i.e.*, makes her first voyage—and all her component parts learn to give and take. A professional engineer read the story fourteen times, and found that there were but two slight errors in the whole of a tale bristling with technicalities. On the other hand, when McAndrew's "Hymn" appeared, a Scotch engineer wrote to me with a revised version which he wanted forwarded to the author. He had copied out the whole of the poem, and, regardless of metre, put what he considered the right word in the right place. He wound up by saying that he quite agreed with its opening lines:

Lord, Thou hast made this world below the shadow of a dream,
An', taught by time, I tak' it so—exceptin' always Steam.

One of Kipling's most popular achievements, "The Absent-Minded Beggar," spread all over the Universe in a fortnight, and the story is told of a gifted lady who recited it on a public platform. In order to give more reality to the poem, she had her three little boys with her, and impressively placed her hand on the head of each child when she came to the line: "Duke's son, Cook's son, son of a Belted Earl." Instead of the expected applause, there sounded an indignant voice from the gallery: "Then you ought to be jolly well ashamed of yourself, mum." Kipling has always felt the insults showered on His Majesty's uniform at a time when a private soldier could

not be served in a restaurant, and has summed up the then situation in another poem:—

For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' 'Chuck him out, the brute!'

But it's 'Saviour of 'is country' when the guns begin to shoot;
An' it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' anything you please;
An' Tommy ain't a bloomin' fool—you bet that Tommy sees!

People often wonder which is the best short story in the world. In all modesty, I would suggest "Without Benefit of Clergy." The man or woman who can read this story of Kipling's without experiencing strong emotion does not deserve to read it. And, in a totally different way, "My Lord the Elephant" is nearly as good. It is not generally known that "My Sunday at Home" was originally entitled "The Child of Calamity." I have before me as I write the MS., with the author's careful alterations. Here, for instance, is a sentence as it was originally written:—

There appeared a vehicle and a horse—the one ancient fly that almost every village can produce if you pay for it. This thing was coming unpaid by me.

Here is the revised version:—

There appeared a vehicle and a horse—the one ancient fly that almost every village can produce at need. This thing was advancing unpaid by me.

In "The Ship that Found Herself" there are many alterations on the proof slips. Take this one:—

Miss Frazer went to and fro on the clean decks, admiring the new paint and the shiny brass work, and the patent things, and particularly the strong straight bow, over which she had cracked a bottle of very good champagne when she christened the steamer *Dimbula*.

Here is the corrected edition:—

Miss Frazer went to and fro on the clean decks, admiring the new paint and the brass work, and the patent winches, and particularly the strong straight bow, over which she had cracked a bottle of champagne when she named the steamer the *Dimbula*.

Simla is up in the mountains—the hills, as they say in India—and the ladies go there in the hot weather to escape the heat of the low country. One lovely cool morning at Simla, Kipling was presented to a "grass widow." They

call those ladies "grass widows" whose husbands are detained by work in the hot cities of the plains. She was very pretty and charming, and, as they talked together in the pleasant coolness, Kipling said: "I suppose you can't help thinking of your poor husband grilling down there?" The lady gave him a strange look, and it was not until afterwards he learned that she was really a widow.

I once had the temerity to suggest to Rudyard Kipling that he should write a sequel to "Kim," called "The Great Game," and I hope that he will one day do so, for everyone wants to know what became of the resourceful Kim in after life.

CHAPTER VII.

THE USES OF FICTION.

I AM inclined to break a lance with the people who do not believe in fiction, and on mentioning the matter to Sir Hall Caine was reminded by him that he had gone pretty exhaustively into the subject at a Vagabond Club dinner presided over by the Rev. R. J. Campbell, whose mere presence at the dinner was in itself an answer to many critics who were not enthusiastic about contemporary novels. With some difficulty we unearthed Sir Hall Caine's notes of his speech, and, with his permission, I give the gist of them. Their substance is so comprehensive that there seems very little fresh ground to be explored, and I would much rather have the whole question put in Sir Hall Caine's words than in my own. The crowded audience who listened to what Sir Hall Caine had to say (among the diners were what the milkman called the "skim de la skim" of the literary world) thanked him very heartily for the trouble he had taken to interest and amuse it:

"We who spend our lives in spinning yarns have no excuse for taking our work too seriously. If we do not know that we are the idle singers of an idle day, it is not because we are not sufficiently reminded of our limitations. We are the Punchinellos of literature, and our business is to amuse the public. In the movements of the time we are not expected to take a part. The fiscal question does not exist for us except in the form of publishers' royalties, and the only sugar crisis that comes into our

lives is the scarcity of that commodity in criticism. Of science, we are expected to know nothing; with religion we are not usually allowed to interfere; and the whole duty of the novelist in politics is to shout with the mob. 'Always shout with the mob,' says Mr. Pickwick. 'But suppose there are two mobs,' says Mr. Snodgrass. 'Then shout,' says Mr. Pickwick, 'with the loudest.'

"It is quite true that we who write novels are the servants of the public, and that our first business is to amuse it; but I suppose that is a function we share with all men who write at all, including even the men who write reviews, those rhubarb pills of literature. When we are appreciated we rejoice and go on writing, and we are only unhappy when we lose credit with the public, though serving it so faithfully. We do not gird too much against the popular idea that we are not practical people and that we live the best part of our lives in fairyland. We know it is a condition which no one can escape from who is fit to write good stories. We are all Balzacs in that respect. If we do not undergo as much sorrow and joy in the writing of a story as if the thing were real, we know we are no story-tellers. If we do not see the imagined thing so intensely that reality has but a visionary life compared with it, we know quite well that, however well we write, the world will remain unmoved. Scott used to say, 'I have worn a wishing-cap, the power of which has been to divert griefs by a touch of the wand of imagination and gild over the future by prospects more fair than can ever be realised.*'

* Note.—"The Craft of Fiction" (Percy Lubbock). The reader as novelist.

It is impossible here to give any adequate idea of the pains Mr. Lubbock has taken in his analysis of the novel. But one or two of his conclusions may be noted. One particularly is to be commended to novel readers—who may never have realised that to do an author justice they must, as Mr. Lubbock points out, themselves become novelists. This is less paradoxical than it may sound.

"The reader of a novel—by which I mean the critical reader—is himself a novelist; he is the maker of a book which may or may not please his taste when it is finished, but of a book for which he must

“ The humblest of us who are Scott’s spiritual sons and heirs tries his best to keep that wishing-cap constantly on his head, and if he can only clap it on the head of the public also he thinks his first function as an author of light literature is fulfilled.

“ But, nevertheless, I rebel with all the strength of my soul against that domineering phrase, ‘ Light Literature.’ It is true it is light when it is just what it ought to be; but, as Hamlet says, ‘ I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down.’ We are always having the phrase thrown at us by the Jobs and Jeremiahs of journalism and public life. It comes, of course, in the acidulated drops of criticism and the platitudinous patronage of our dear friend the pulpit, but we also get it by way of a sort of Mellin’s Food in the dry nursing of the public itself. It is astonishing how hypercritical the good public can be about its novel-reading. It reads novels from one end of the earth to the other, but it is always apologising to itself for reading them and pretending to read something more solid. Lydia Languish in ‘ The Rivals ’ sends her maid round the circulating libraries for all the liveliest novels of the time, and her room is full of them, but as soon as Sir Anthony Absolute and Mr. Malaprop appear she flings ‘ Peregrine Pickle ’ under the toilet table, throws ‘ Roderick Random ’ into the closet, smuggles ‘ The Man of Feeling ’ into her pocket, and opens somebody’s sermons at the page about sobriety. The public is perpetually playing that little foolish scene with itself, and it is wonderful how easily it gets good men and women to act

take his own share of the responsibility. The author does his part, but he cannot transfer his book like a bubble into the brain of the critic; he cannot make sure that the critic will possess his work. The reader must therefore become, for his part, a novelist, never permitting himself to suppose that the creation of the book is solely the affair of the author.”

That is very true. It may seem a lot to demand from the average novel reader; and yet it is possible that many are unconsciously novelists in the sense meant by Mr. Lubbock. It is the sympathetic reader who helps the story along, who identifies himself with a character: as much, perhaps, as does that character’s creator; and so does his share in the creation of a novel.—K. K.

the 'heavy' parts of the Anthony Absolutes and Mrs. Malaprops of intellectual propriety. If it is not a Prime Minister, it is an ex-Prime Minister in one character or both. First it is Lord Rosebery telling us in effect that all novelists compared with Scott are as smoke to fire, and that the superincumbent mass of books, chiefly fiction, is submerging literature. Then it is our friend Sir William Robertson Nicoll saying that, in the multitude of new works, about two novels a year are worth putting on our shelves. And, beyond these voices, there are the Lydia Languishes of the public, with novels hidden away in every pocket, taking up the parable of Lord Rosebery and the jeremiads of the late Mr. Jeremiah Stead.

Against all this playful masquerade I say boldly that fiction is popular all over the world, at the beginning of the twenty-second century, because of all human agencies it best answers the world's need, being the best educator, the best peace-maker, the best purifier, and the best comforter humanity finds in literature to-day.

"Down to seventy years ago fiction occupied itself mainly with illuminating periods in the past. Did it not do an educational work in doing that? Does the general public know the end of the fourteenth century in Central Europe from the letters of Erasmus or from the glowing pages of 'The Cloister and the Hearth'? Do we know the history of the Border feuds from the old chronicles or from the novels of Scott? Do we know the people of England in the eighteenth century from the great essayists of that age or from the portraits of the 'Lovelaces' and Squire Westerns that came warm from the imagination of Fielding and Richardson?

"During the last seventy years fiction has occupied itself largely with describing life in districts, and by this time nearly every county in the kingdom has had its novelist-historian. Has not that been an educational work of priceless importance? Where can we learn our Derbyshire so thoroughly as from 'Adam Bede,' or breathe the air of Yorkshire so well as in 'Wuthering Heights'? If we

could wipe out English fiction for the past hundred years, we should wipe out half of all we know about our own country. Great periods and great tracts of country would be dark which are now lit up for us by that light of imagination which the novelists have handed on. And in the time to come, when people want to arrive at a picture of our own generation, to know how we lived and amused ourselves, and what sort of folks we were, as well as what Acts of Parliament we passed and what wars we waged, which are the documents they will have to go to? Will they be the Blue-Books, the newspapers, the Whitakers, the Hazells, and the 'Who's Who' of the period? I daresay they will go to these sources, but it is not too much to say that they will also go to whatever is left of the poor despised light literature of the present moment—the Wessex novels of Mr. Hardy, the Scotch stories of Sir J. M. Barrie and Ian Maclaren, the Cockney sketches of Mr. Jerome and Mr. Pett Ridge, and perhaps a great many other good things besides.

“ Then I claim for fiction that of all human agencies for promoting international peace, the novel is one of the best. We used to think that all the quarrels between the nations were made by the kings, and that the hope of universal peace was in the progress of democracy. Democracy was to be the Wonder-working Rabbi of the synagogue of perpetual peace. But Democracy, as represented by its organs, the newspapers, judging by recent experience, does not seem to be a very miraculous peace-maker. No, it is not the spirit of democracy, but the spirit of brotherhood, that will bring in the reign of universal peace, if it ever comes; and surely there is no better agency at work in creating the spirit of brotherhood among the races than the simple stories which are being interchanged in translations. Russia was merely a hell-born empire to some of the people of Great Britain until Tolstoy and Turgenev began to light up the dark heart of it with human beings like ourselves, and, once having seen this, the Russian moujik became own brother to the English peasant, with the same joys, the same sorrows, the same needs. In like

manner England must have been little more to most Russians than the island of the enemies they encountered in the Crimea, while the enormous popularity of Charles Dickens in Moscow and St. Petersburg showed London to be inhabited by first cousins to the characters from low life in Gogol and Gorky. Surely the literature which makes us feel the spiritual brotherhood of the peoples is a link binding together all men and all races, and fiction is doing that every day.

“ I claim for fiction that it is a great purifier. We hear a good deal about the impurity of certain books and plays. This complaint comes usually from the dear old Partridges* of journalism who go to the theatre for the first time at fifty-five years of age, and do not know enough yet to realise that in the long run impurity does not even pay. That, thank God, is a broad, general truth which might be maintained from the history of literature in every country and proved from the very essence of it. Humanity does not want either novels or plays that represent human nature as worse than it ever is, but it does want such as show it to be better than it ever was. When the elder Dumas was dying he called his son to his bedside and begged him to tell him faithfully, not as the son or as the friend, but as the honest judge, if anything he had written would live. The younger Dumas reflected for a moment, and then said: ‘ Yes, father, much of what you have written will live, if only for one reason, because you have painted man not merely as he is, but as he would like to be.’ That was magnificently true both as a criticism and as a theory. Those of us who spend our lives in spinning fables know

*“ Hamlet, the best player,” cries Partridge with a contemptuous sneer; “ why, I could act as well myself. I am sure that if I had seen a ghost, I should have looked in the very same manner and done just as he did. And then, to be sure, in that scene, as you called it, between him and his mother, where you told me he acted so fine, why, Lord help me, any man—that is, any good man—that had such a mother would have done exactly the same. I know you are only joking with me; but, indeed, though I was never at a play in London, yet I have seen acting before in the country; and the king for my money; he speaks all his words distinctly, half as loud again as any other. Anybody may see he is an actor.”—TOM JONES.

perfectly, if we know anything, that we can only get a response from the public if we speak to humanity on its nobler side. The law of sympathy is the deepest of all laws in the art of fiction. We must get sympathy for the blackest villain, or the public will have none of him. The moment we get hold of a bad character we must justify him according to his own ideas. We must help him to reveal the poor, ugly, distorted image of the divine in him, or, if we cannot do that, we must kick him out of the book as speedily as possible. As George Sand says, the wind plays upon our old harps as it pleases in all things but that. It may have its sharps and its flats and its big booming notes, but it must always have its tremolos, or it is not worth touching, because nobody will listen to it.

“ Finally, I claim for fiction that of all forms of literature it is the best comforter. Joubert says: ‘ fiction has no right to exist unless it is more beautiful than reality ’; and to ‘ more beautiful ’ I would add, more just, more satisfying, and in the best sense more joyful. We laugh at the love of the public for a happy ending to a novel, but I cannot for my life see why we should. The craving of human nature is not necessarily for the clap-trap of marriage-bells, but for spiritual compensation—the confidence that one way or other everything must end happily. It will suffer itself to see its hero die, if only he dies in a good cause and all comes at last to a satisfactory close. Pessimists will say, ‘ I don’t always see it happen.’ But is that a sufficient reply? A lady said to Turner the painter, ‘ I don’t see your colours in the landscape.’ ‘ I daresay not, madam,’ said Turner, ‘ but don’t you wish you could?’ Surely this is just the difference between art and life. In life we too frequently see wrong-doing victorious and right-doing in the dust; the evil man growing rich and dying in his bed, and the good man becoming poor and dying in the streets. But our days are few, our view is limited, we cannot watch the event long enough. Isn’t that what fiction is for—to watch long enough, to answer the craving of the human soul for compensation, to show

us that success may be the worst failure and failure the best success; that poverty may be better than riches, and that

Here and there my lord is lower than his oxen and
his swine,

Here and there a cotter's babe is royal born by
right divine?

Is not fiction always doing that? Good or bad, weak or strong, is it not of its very nature trying to show the axis on which the frame of things turns? Is there any other agency in literature that is doing this or can do it? So I say Fiction has no reason to be ashamed of the function it fills, that it has no cause to hang its head, that its work is of good influence, that it is universally popular because it is universally useful, and that not only the masterpieces of the novelist's art, but the rank and file of it, nay, the humblest and poorest of it, however short its life or obscure its origin, is doing something for the world that nothing else can do so well."

When one considers the mental stress and strain to which novelists and writers of all kinds are subjected, it is remarkable that many of them live to an advanced old age. Fielding's death is ascribed to his perpetually dosing himself with quack medicines. Sterne's lungs were naturally weak, and he alternated dissipated nights with draughts of tar water. Goldsmith was financially worried. Smollett had a sluggish liver. Charlotte Brontë's health was seriously impaired by the struggles (not literary) and privations of her young days. Sir Walter Scott killed himself by struggling to pay debts not his own. Dickens broke down through the loss of vitality brought about by his reading tours and love of long walks. Thackeray had terrible family troubles. William Black did not over-exert himself with literary labour during the last eight years of his life. Crockett read each of his 13,000 books and Scott's novels every year, and rose at four o'clock after six hours' sleep. It is a wonder he lived as long as he did. Samuel Richardson died at seventy-two, Fanny Burney at eighty-eight, Bulwer Lytton at seventy, Mrs. Trollope at eighty-three, her son Anthony at sixty-seven. He might have

lived as long as his mother but for his insane idea of paying his man to wake him early so that he might write his regulation 250 words per quarter of an hour before beginning his official duties. Lord Beaconsfield died at seventy-five, Ruskin at eighty-one, Charles Lever at sixty-six, William Carleton at seventy-one, Samuel Lover at seventy-three, and George Meredith at eighty-one.

Dr. Chalmers Mitchell, F.R.S., once stated that the working bee or drone lived only a few months, while a queen ant belonging to Lord Avebury had lived thirteen years. Grasshoppers were good for seventeen years, whilst many fish die within twelve months, although a pike would live up to a hundred years, and the tortoise a hundred and fifty years. The rhinoceros and elephant were reputed to live as long as two centuries, but in confinement they had never reached more than from thirty to forty years, the maximum in army elephants being fifty to sixty years. Man occasionally lived one hundred years, and, generally speaking, his death was a mere accident.

CHAPTER VIII.

YOUNG AUTHORS AND THE GREEN SLIPS

"**N**OW," said the young author bitterly, as he dropped into my favourite armchair, "see what the beast says of my first novel after I've put all that was best of me into it"; and he threw down the little slip of green paper with the air of a deeply wounded man. "The anonymous skunk!" he added savagely. "The blatant scorpion! Why can't I call him out and kill him?"

I took up the green slip and advised my young friend to "put on a pipe."

"Is this a time to smoke?"

"Of course it is. Most novelists have to—eventually. I'll tell you a story. There was a rising young politician who sometimes looked upon the winecup a little unwisely. One morning, his mother came into his bedroom and said in pained tones: 'My son, is this following in your father's footsteps?' And he replied: 'Well, mother, since you ask the question, I rather think it is.'"

"That's a dashed silly story. I don't see the point."

"I thought you wouldn't. Its point is that when you follow in the footsteps of your predecessors and write a novel you invite criticism, and, like everyone else who has invited it before you, you don't relish it because it's unfavourable. Now, 'honest Injun,' wouldn't you have been greatly disappointed if the critics hadn't taken any notice of your book?"

"Of course. When a work of genius——"

"Yes, I've heard all that before; and I've said it myself—often. D'you mind a personal reminiscence?"

"Fire away."

"When my first novel came out, I thought it was a great work and that there had never been anything like it. As a matter of fact, there hadn't. I looked it up the other day and wanted to 'slate' myself. A certain critic who had mislaid his copy asked me to send him another. I collected the necessary sum to buy it—buy it, mind you!—and sent him a copy. He 'slated' it up hill and down dale."

"Well?"

"I was with difficulty prevented from challenging him. Now——"

"Now?"

"With the wisdom of advancing years, I know it was a bad book and that he was quite right."

"But he was a heartless brute."

"Oh, no, he wasn't. He made me think. 'I'll show him whether I can't write a book,' I said to myself; and I did."

"Again—well?"

"Man, I've been revenged seventy times seven. The other day I met him, feeble and bent and wan, and he said with tears in his eyes: 'Perhaps, if I hadn't "slated" your first book, I might have escaped reading the other sixty-three.'

'Tho' the mills of God grind slowly,
Yet they grind exceeding small';

and they're grinding him to pulp because I told him that if I live long enough I mean to get up to a hundred, and if he lives long enough he'll have to review them. So it isn't 'all beer and skittles' for him."

"I don't understand your vulgar allusions."

"Oh, yes, you do. My son, you want unlimited praise; that's what's the matter with you. Naturally enough, you didn't get it."

"The artistic temp——"

“ Bosh! You have to

‘ Learn in suffering what you teach in song.’

It’s part of your apprenticeship, and a very hard part, too. Though you don’t like it, you must be passed through cleansing fires.”

“ I don’t want to be passed through cleansing fires.”

“ That’s natural enough, but cleansing fires are good for you, and you’ll have to be cleansed. Just think of your arrogance—the arrogance of a boy who writes a book and dares to send it forth into this world of suffering men and women, either to teach or amuse them. You can’t do that till you admit that you know nothing. Then you will learn something and pass it on.”

“ But,” he again took up the green slip, “ he needn’t have been so brutal.”

“ My dear boy, the critic is the surgeon who has to apply his knife to cut away the infected parts of you. Then, you’ve a chance to recover. If he’d said: ‘ This is the greatest book since “ Esmond,” ’ you’d have gone from bad to worse. A critic can’t afford to be ambiguous. Go down on your marrowbones and thank your Maker you’re writing in 1922 and not 1809.”

“ Why? ”

“ I picked up at a second-hand bookseller’s the other day a set of old quarterlies for twopence a volume. You should see the awful criticisms there when a useless book had passed the ‘ Reader ’ and got into print. There was no ambiguity about them.”

“ Don’t want to see any more criticisms, either by ‘ Readers ’ or critics, for the rest of my life.”

“ Well, I had a chat with my friend Sir William Robertson Nicoll at the ‘ Hogarth ’ one day. As well as I can remember, he said: ‘ The bitterest cup an unsuccessful author should have to drink is the cup of Lethe. A poor book speedily sinks; no amount of ingenious puffery will keep it afloat. Slashing reviews are hardly ever justifiable. It is a miserable business stabbing or hacking poor creatures who have published books at their own cost, and who have, in addition, to bear the agony and humiliation

of failure. "Slating" reviews,' he was convinced, 'are generally written from personal motives, or are the thoughtless acts of very young critics. People of experience see so much better how hard a profession literature is that they have a certain amount of sympathy with authors and look upon them as persons who are trying to do their best.' Now, that's the opinion of the best-informed critic of the day. If he says anything about it, in praise or blame, listen to him and profit by it. Just go home and think it over."

He threw his green slip in the fire and went.

Just a few words about those green slips which bring the criticisms of an author's book to him.

Nowadays there are several "press cutting agencies" for the comfort and sorrow of young authors. You pay so much for a hundred cuttings, which are clipped from various papers; pasted on little slips of green paper (the green is intended as a delicate tribute to young authors) and sent to you. Sometimes, when your notice runs into a second column, you get half of it and half of the other man's.

Many years ago I was secretary to an eminent man of letters. One morning he sent me to a Press Cutting Agency to find out what the British Public thought of him. I got there very early and discovered a benevolent-looking old gentleman sitting at a desk at the further end of a long room with a book in front of him. When each girl (they employ girls to read the papers and cut out the notices) came in, she called out: "Good morning, Mr. Vavas seur" (his name was not Vavas seur, but I dare not call him Smith, or a thousand Smiths would bring libel actions against me), and then went up a stairway to a kind of garret, where the newspapers were spread out. Mr. Vavas seur entered in his book the time of her arrival, and, if she were late, probably fined her. The last girl (what a pretty girl she was, too!) came in without seeing me and said in dulcet tones: "Good morning, Mr. Vavas seur." As Mr. Vavas seur bent his good, grey head over the book to make a note that she was late, she put her thumb up to her nose and

spread her fingers out, with a muttered, "Ugh! You old pig," and ran swiftly up the narrow stairs.

But I am wandering from "Press cuttings." The usual price is about a guinea a hundred. If you have written a small magazine article, the girls will industriously make up the hundred out of that and expect you to begin all over again. After your book has appeared, the press notices have an objectionable habit, as I have explained elsewhere, of coming by the first post. You stroll down to breakfast early some joyous spring morning and suddenly see this little pile of green notices on the top of your letters. The maid always places it on top; that is what she is for.

"I don't mind the beastly things," you say as you sit down and put the green pile under your letters. Then you humbug yourself by reading your letters first, although you haven't the slightest idea what they're about, for you *want* to know what is in that little green pile. But you will be firm. It shan't spoil your breakfast.

A sweet voice at your elbow anxiously says: "You haven't read your press notices, dear."

You affect to start. "Press notices! Oh, ah, to be sure. Are there any?"

She silently puts the green packet into your hand. "I'd better leave you alone with it."

You are very thankful for her tact, although you are perfectly well aware that she knows you noticed how her hand trembled when she poured out the tea. She won't stay to witness your humiliation, if it's to be humiliation; if it's to be the other thing, she'll soon know all about it.

But she goes out and the deadly green pile continues to grin at you. Why haven't you the strength of mind to remember that all great and lofty souls, all eminent reformers, all men who strive to leave the world wiser and better than they found it, have probably had to put up with this sort of thing? You stretch out your hand with a "Come, let me clutch thee" air, and draw it back again. Why not leave this "thing of evil" undisturbed?

Then you steal cautiously to the door and look out. She is in the porch, humming an air with overdone carelessness. You know why she is there and, with a groan, go back, take up the green adder and let loose its serpent brood—five of them.

The first one is all right—from your point of view. The second is undiluted acid, the third vinegar, the fourth verjuice, the fifth! Aha, this man is a really great critic:

“ Mr. —— has written a first book. It possesses an engaging freshness which disarms adverse criticism. Mr. —— has seen and observed much, knows what he is writing about, has not any of the vices which lie in wait for the accepted author. We have read his story from cover to cover with undiluted pleasure, and congratulate him on having written a book which will live. He must go on.”

You carefully put the first four notices in the fire and saunter out to the porch, also humming an air. “ Oh, about your notices? ” she asks casually.

“ Notices! What about them? ” you query with elaborate naturalness.

“ N-nothing. Are they—are they as nasty as—usual? ”

“ Nasty! Oh, dear, no. What put such an absurd idea into your head? Only one this morning (Heaven forgive you). Man knows what he’s writing about. Now, I’m just going down the garden to hunt caterpillars.”

She flies into the breakfast-room, snatches up the green serpent, now transformed into an equally green dove, and kisses it. And, what’s still more wonderful, although she must have seen the smouldering remains of the other serpents, you never know it.

That’s what happens with green slips if you’re a young author. If you’re an old one, you’re like the little girl (it’s a very ancient story) who promised her mother that she would not eat more than one slice of cake at the party. When she came home, she told how she had kept her word although the maid brought the cake three times. “ And then, darling, what did you say? ” asked the fond mother.

108 **More Memoirs—and Some Travels**

“ Oh, I just said what daddy says when we have cold mutton for lunch: ‘ Take the d——d thing away! ’ ”

* * * * *

My study fire burns low, a fierce wind howls around the ancient house and it has many voices. There are faces in the fading fire, faces of dead friends who rise up to ask questions. “ Before you come to us, what have you done? How dare you talk like this? What does the world owe you? ”

“ I don’t know. I don’t know. A little, perhaps—I hope—I trust—a little; but I don’t know! ”

CHAPTER IX.

OLLA PODRIDA

MISS BETHAM EDWARDS once made a few confessions as to her views regarding the literary career and publishers in general. Looking back upon my own early days, I can only wish that I had come in contact with the publishers mentioned by Miss Betham Edwards. They were very amiable to authors fifty years ago. "If you will favour me with a call when next in London," wrote old Mr. Blackett to Miss Betham Edwards, "I shall have great pleasure in talking over with you a new work of fiction. As you will doubtless soon begin a new story, allow me to enclose a cheque for fifty pounds on account of the same." I am thinking of sending out a circular on somewhat similar lines. "My dear sir,—I will allow you to have the privilege of sending me a cheque for a hundred pounds, provided you care to take a book from me." When ten publishers have sent me a hundred pounds, I shall be free from sordid cares in the immediate present, and can attempt that work of genius for which all my friends have been so long waiting.

There is a good deal to be said for his pleasant—pleasant to impecunious authors, at least—system. It would allay so much anxiety on the part of youthful authors how to make both ends meet, although, possibly, it might increase the publishers' difficulties. Miss Betham Edwards seems to have thought that things have altered for the better since she first began to write. With authors' societies, syndicates, literary and press agencies, and the rest, the relations of author and publisher have completely changed since she proudly corrected her first proof, and Byron wrote to his publisher: "My dear Mr. Murray, you're in a d——d

hurry." They have changed, but whether for the better I very much doubt.

There is a greater fascination in starving by literature than in earning a decent income at the Bar or any other profession. The reason for this is that there is always the chance of a book "turning up trumps" some day. An author may labour for two or three years at a book and produce an intensely dull volume; on the other hand, he may dash off a light little thing full of mirth and frivolity, and the public will rush in its millions to buy it. Jerome's "Three Men in a Boat," which was written in the high spirits of youth, has "knocked out" "Robinson Crusoe" as a book for boys, and continues to sell steadily. It has also been filmed.

If you ever go to King's Cross Station, you will see a bookstall belonging to Messrs. Smith. By the side of the bookstall there is an exaggerated dinner-tray, and on this dinner-tray are ranged in ghastly order, what a linen-draper would call "soiled stock"; that is, books which have not sold at the proper price. There you may see the works of several of our leading novelists—and some who are misleading—at greatly reduced prices. In the train the other evening I saw a friend reading a battered volume which bore my own name on the back. Filled with innocent delight, I told him how gratifying it was to find that, if the exterior went for anything, he must have read it twenty times. "Oh, no, I haven't," he said cheerfully. "The fact is, you lit'ry fellers are always so conceited. You see, my people know your people, and if I hadn't read your last book they'd make it hot for me. So I waited till Smiths' put it on their tea-tray and got it for eighteenpence."

I told him that he was an immoral villain, and that I hoped his family would continue to "make it hot" for him, whether he purchased my books or not; whereupon he pleaded in extenuation that eight-and-six was more than anybody could be expected to pay for the privilege of my friendship. "If you *will* write books," he said, "you must take the consequences."

That reminds me how I first became connected with literature in its highest form, *i.e.*, journalism! There was

an advertisement in a paper saying that contributions were wanted for a new humorous weekly. Would-be contributors were invited to meet at nine o'clock on the first floor of a public-house in Shoe Lane. I put on my best clothes and bought a new hat. When I reached the meeting-place in Shoe Lane I entered a smoke-stained, low-ceiled room, with a long table in the middle. At one end of the table sat an affable old gentleman in his shirt sleeves, gavel in hand. Other gentlemen, also in shirt sleeves, sat round the baize-covered table, smoking pipes of strong tobacco. When I told him who I was, the chairman hailed me with enthusiasm, and I could see that my new hat had produced a sensation. Then he made an eloquent speech about his proposed new paper. It was to be a capital paper—if it could get sufficient capital. There were plenty of gifted contributors sitting round that table—men of whom England would one day be proud.

Coming down from the general to the particular, the chairman asked me how many shares I would take, as no one but shareholders would be allowed to contribute. I took a one-pound share, and promptly paid for the first half of it. Had I been of a more suspicious nature, I should have noticed that directly the chairman pocketed my half-sovereign copious supplies of beer and other liquids appeared upon the table, and the countenances of the other prospective contributors brightened appreciably.

The paper ran for three weeks; so did the editor—when the bills came in! Every fortnight for some months after the paper's untimely end I received a letter from the Liquidator of the company requesting me to pay up that other half-sovereign. After eighteen letters, the Liquidator apparently gave it up as a bad job. I was not morally justified in withholding that large sum from him, and it has worried me ever since. Still, perhaps it is better to let the dead past bury its dead Liquidators, and to say no more about it.

But, curiously enough, this contact with men who actually wrote, succeeded in giving a concrete form to my somewhat nebulous aspirations. I began to see that

authors, printers, and publishers, were not the demi-gods of my imagination, but mere ordinary mortals, with a knack of scribbling, who had in bygone days paid their half-sovereigns as an entrance fee to the paths of literature.

The other day I was talking to the local minion of a great Circulating Library about the books which went through his hands, and he obligingly enlightened me on several points concerning them. He said that it was a most important thing for an author to grasp the fact that the longer he made his books the better. This seemed to me such rank heresy that I could not help asking the reason for such a statement.

“ Well, you see,” he said, “ the whole thing is so exceedingly simple that it lies in a nutshell. You must look at it not only from the author’s point of view, but from the Circulating Library’s also. The Library Clerk is bound to save himself and his employers all the trouble he can. Now, if a subscriber comes in and asks for a long book, the Clerk knows very well that the subscriber will take twice the time to get through that book that he will occupy in reading one of half its length. Anything which tends to the saving of time and labour is an economy in these hard-up days, so you can’t wonder that when a new book is submitted to a Circulating Library for subscription, the first impulse of its Buyer is to look at its length. If it is a hundred and fifty thousand word book, he knows that it will keep people busy for a long time, and so orders as many copies as he possibly can.”

This is not as it should be. In the ancient days of Thackeray and Dickens,* when not nearly so many books were published, the whole state of affairs was different. Then people bought a book at a time; they did not purchase them by the ton, or order them in from the Stores with the

* I thought Shelley could “ cuss hisself black in the face ” when he let himself go. Here is a sample of what Charles Dickens could do when roused; it must be remembered, however, that he was boiling over with indignation at what he considered an unwarranted attack on a private reputation. “ When I think,” he wrote to his friend, the great actor, Macready, “ that every dirty speck upon the fair face of the Almighty’s creation who writes in a filthy, beastly newspaper;

weekly supply of meat. Book lovers of those times rode about in their old-fashioned chariots and called upon one another for advice, or made the choice of their next book a subject for anxious prayer.

When, after taking sweet counsel together, they resolved to buy a certain book, they went in triumphal progress to the nearest county town and ordered it with due pomp and solemnity. In those days the choice of a book was a very serious matter for your country dame. It did not mean that the purchaser would spend a couple of afternoons over it and then throw it away; it often meant that he or she relied on the book for society during the whole winter, and if the people of the book were not interesting people the winter would be an exceedingly dull one.

Nowadays a great many authors would prefer to make their books the reasonable length of sixty thousand words. A great deal can be said in sixty thousand words, and, as a rule, the story gains by not being longer. In the old days, when books were fewer, an author would have been considered as attempting a fraud on the public if he made his book anything less than a hundred and fifty thousand words, or even more. But, in many instances, we have altered all that.

When we go to the country from Saturday to Monday, and have no learned leisure in our lives, if we wish to keep abreast of current literature we cannot read long books. We gallop through a book in the course of an evening, and never wish to see it again. The characters do not linger in our memories like those of Dickens and Thackeray. Where in any modern book will you find as many interesting characters as in "Martin Chuzzlewit"?

Though very long books are occasionally written nowadays, in the whirl of our hurried daily round we have not

every rotten-hearted panderer who has been beaten, kicked, and rolled in the kennel, yet struts it in the editorial 'We' once a week; every vagabond that an honest man's gorge must rise at; every living emetic in that noxious drug-shop, the Press, can have his fling at such men and call them knaves and fools and thieves—I grow so vicious that with bearing hard upon my pen I break the nib down, and with keeping my teeth set make my jaws ache."

much time for them; our wives read them and “tell us all about them” at dinner. If Thackeray himself were to bring out “Vanity Fair” now, his publisher would want to go through it with a blue pencil and cut out those pregnant reflections, which, although they are so interesting, delay the action of the story.

Other times, other manners. I fancy that George Eliot herself would have rather a bad quarter of an hour if she were to come to life and take a MS. to some of the younger publishers. “My dear Madam,” they would say, “you move too slowly for the times. Mr. Lewes has ruined your style. When you can give us something with a murder and an elopement in each chapter, with a few forgeries thrown in at the end, and a touch of not too French gaiety just to even up matters a little, then we shall be happy to see you again.”

The difficulty concerning modern literature is not that it is bad, but that there is too much of it. In the spacious times of great Elizabeth men wrote a sonnet every day as a matter of course. Now every one writes two or three novels a year equally as a matter of course, and the melancholy result will be that we shall all have to read each other, or go unread if we are not given away with a pound of tea.

Has it ever occurred to you to consider the various stages through which a book passes before it reaches the reader? “Proofs,” for instance? Kindly come, Gentle Reader, into my “den” and have a look round. If you do so, you will perceive “proofs” of the author’s calling. Proofs on the floor, proofs on the chairs, proofs on the top of the typewriter. What does it all mean? And what is a proof? Ask the grimy little boy waiting on the mat and he will tell you that the publishing season is coming on, and that I am going through the “proofs” of my books for the year, and touching up the MS. of one for next year.

When the printer receives the MS. of a novel, he gives it to a number of intelligent noblemen in shirt-sleeves, who “set it up”; *i.e.*, if they are not using a linotype machine, they take certain letters out of little boxes, put them into

words, the words into lines, and a "pull" is taken of their gifted work. A "pull" is just a rough impress of the printed matter. The "Reader" (another useful individual in shirt-sleeves, but a man who can spell better than most authors) goes through it, straightens out the author's spelling, the printer's grammar, verifies the quotations, and yards of this stuff are sent to the author to look through. When he has looked through it and marvelled at the accuracy of his own spelling, he sprinkles in some alterations, the "proofs" are sent back to the printer, who makes the corrections in the type, cuts the slips up into pages, and returns them to the author. This is termed "the revise," because it generally needs such a lot more licking into shape.

Then you put in the "contents" table, draw a long breath, and wonder whether the book is going to "knock the public," or whether the public is going to knock you—with a club! But, oh! the rapture of seeing those smelly, inky, dirty proofs! The delight of drowning in one's own eloquence! The noble type! The mighty paragraphs! The exclamation points sprinkled all over the page in profligate profusion! The dashes and dots! The apt alliteration's artful aid! The headings of the chapters! The quotations you invent "off your own bat," as it were, when you can't get anything else to fit! The myriad and one things which go to the making of a novel—things which no outsider can realise! And to think that there will be no printers, *i.e.*, practical printers, in the next world. "'Tis sad, 'tis passing sad!"

The three most beautiful things in this world are printers' proofs, an Arab mare, and—a lovely woman. I put them in this not generally accepted order because proofs never change, never grow old. "Age cannot wither, nor custom stale their infinite variety"; but an Arab mare and a lovely girl both lose their manes and teeth. The girl sometimes kicks, but the Arab mare never!

I am vastly sorry for you, Gentle Reader. All you know about an author's book is when it comes to you in its smug-faced get up, its clean Sunday-morning face, its glossy

type, its mathematical regularity of page, its trim edges, and all that sort of thing. To the author it is a different book, and he promptly disowns the drawing-room atrocity that it has become. He knew when it was first conceived beneath the light of the morning star, when he woke up in bed and said to himself with astonishment: "By Jove, I've an idea for a novel. I'll cut into my 'den' and jot it down before it proves to be the stuff that dreams are made of." Then that first chapter. How the author began, in all sorts of places, to meet his characters and get to know them. No outsider ever realises what an author has to put up with from the society of his characters when he is writing a book. And yet they must always be with him, always doing things, always getting in the way until turned into "copy." Sometimes he has had enough of them for a time. He wants to get away from them. But no; in the middle of a dinner party the villain turns up, or the heroine tearfully whispers to him that it is a lovely moonlight night, and he might give her a few minutes with the hero by way of a change. Then the author apologises to his guests, sneaks quietly away while the fever fit is on him, and the guests go home and call him a conceited fool, who is always giving himself airs.

It is a hard thing not to keep the proofs to one's self; everyone in the story seems so much more real before the slips are put into pages. And it does seem such a pity to give your heroine away to other people. When you are drowsing in your armchair, she comes to you, a beautiful, living, breathing girl. "Who are you?" you falter. "Who am I?" she asks. "You, who have created me, ask me that! You, who have given me a soul and taught me to love, to overcome sorrow and disappointment, to act rightly for the sake of right—you ask me who I am?" "But," you feebly remark, "you are so beautiful, you dazzle me. Are you really my heroine?" Then she looks at you again. "Yes, I am your heroine and something else also. Don't you know that I embody all your ideal fancies, your best self, all the tender dreams and hopes and fears you have never dared put into words? Don't you know that they all belong to me—that people will look

through me until they see my creator. I am only the guidepost leading to you!" And when she says that, you have to go through your proofs again in order to knock out everything that doesn't rightly pertain to her. You've no business to put yourself into your books; it isn't consistent—doesn't belong to your characters. But, somehow, in spite of your efforts, little bits of yourself do creep in. The sorrow which haunts you, the dead lips which will never smile on you again, the meeting with an old friend who passes with averted eyes, the slings and arrows, etc.—they all come in and tinge your work. If they did not, it would be just like anybody else's work, and you wouldn't have an "Ego." "Proofs ready, sir?" asks the small boy on the mat. "Oh, yes, here they are. Be off with you." As Mr. Weller remarks, I was in a "referee."

I was once asked by a philanthropic old gentleman: "Why do authors drink?" Thinking it was a conundrum, I said: "Because they are thirsty." Afterwards I began to realise that the question was one which has troubled men since authors began to write. Sometimes it has troubled the authors themselves. At other times they have not worried about the matter, but have steadily drunk themselves to death and made an end of it. Why do authors drink? What is the philosophy of it?

It would seem as if some authors drank from force of habit, others in search of inspiration, others to forget their troubles, others to deaden physical pain, others because the craving cannot be overcome, and the hereditary taint is in them.

Sometimes your imaginative author purposely drinks in order to escape from the dull reality of his surroundings. De Quincey did his finest work under the influence of opium. I could point to modern instances where, by means of drastic coercion, certain writers have been prevented from drinking, and have never afterwards written a line worth reading. This is lamentable, but it only proves that once we become slaves to a habit how impossible it is to get rid of that habit.

But why these melancholy musings? Simply because I meet many disappointed authors who drown their sorrows

in drink. They say that drink enables them to forget that they have not succeeded in the world, and so, in order to come to the front, they deliberately go to the back. That is, practically, what it amounts to, although it is perfectly useless to tell them so. They always quote the old argument that some of the finest literary work in the world has been produced under the inspiration of drink, quite forgetting that some of the worst has also originated in the same way. Burns was a great poet in spite of his drinking habits, not because of them. But when your average man wants to drink, he is not deterred by little fallacies of this sort.

An artist named Huxley committed suicide and left a will bequeathing his money to the coroner's officer. This Huxley had been a pupil of Haydon's. Haydon discovered the lad, who was apprenticed to a cabinet-maker. Haydon, in his diary, is full of enthusiasm as to this boy's magnificent genius, and says that, "if ever properly assisted, he will be an honour to English Art." Haydon committed suicide, Huxley committed suicide; and it would be interesting to fill up the gap between the magnificent promise of this boy's youth and the misery, degradation, and disgrace of his old age. The lamentable part of all this prostitution of fine talent, either by fatal weakness or by circumstances, is that it is lost to the world.

The saddest case I have in my mind's eye is that of the poet Ernest Dowson. Mr. Symons says that Dowson was unable to keep from drink. This poet left but little work behind him. What he has left, however, is so fine that it is with the keenest regret one feels that his career ended in such misery. Take, for example, the lines:

I said, "There is an end of my desire;
 Now have I sown, and I have harvested.
 And these are ashes of an ancient fire,
 Which, verily, shall not be quickened.
 Now will I take me to a place of peace,
 Forget mine heart's desire:
 In solitude and prayer, work out my soul's release."

This is a melancholy subject, and yet unavoidably forces itself on one's attention. Life would be more enjoyable if we could see nothing but the jester's cap and bells and avoid

the under-currents of existence. Sometimes, however, as I pass the Law Courts in the bright sunshine, I meet the customary "forlorn and shipwrecked brother" deviously weaving his way from one Fleet Street* tavern to another. That man is as surely dead as if he were lying in his coffin instead of walking down the street. What can one do but breathe a pitying prayer for him as he passes! It is such "bad form" to be in earnest about anything in this world, to display the slightest emotion, to feel that a man is "going under" and make an effort to save him! One almost hesitates to write about this seamy side of literature. How much easier to swallow the waters of Lethe, nor

..... Strive or run
On dusty highways ever, a vain race?
The long night cometh, starless, void of sun.

True! But so does the short, engrossing day of joyous work and endeavour!

Some unfortunate authors, however—authors who have lost heart—are very much in the position of Cardinal Antonelli. That unrivalled delegate of the Clarendon Press, Ingram Bywater, a great smoker, was accustomed to tell of a repartee of Pio Nono to Cardinal Antonelli. Pio Nono, conversing with the Cardinal, lit a cigarette and handed his case to the Cardinal, who said austere, "You know, Holiness, that I have not that vice." "You know, Eminence," replied the Pope, "that if it were a vice you *would* have it."

Lately, many of us have indulged in prolonged fits of literary pessimism. Everywhere I see dejected faces. Long faces in the literary clubs! Long faces in the literary streets! Long faces in the publisher's office! Long faces among the people who read for publishers! Long faces everywhere! The next generation of writers—if, indeed,

* To experience the irresistible charm of Fleet Street, one has to frequent it constantly. The late Alphonse Courlander put it very well when he said: "You may call Fleet Street what you like, but the secret of it eludes you always. It has as many moods as a woman; it is the street of laughter and of tears, of adventure and dullness, of romance and reality, of promise and of lost hopes, of conquest and

genius be hereditary—will look like Roman-nosed cab-horses.

What is it all about?

I take it that one of the primary objects of existence is to enjoy life. Of course, it is sinful to wake up, revel in the sunshine, feel yourself a little child that lightly draws its breakfast rations, and so on; that it is unutterably wicked to make a joke on a wet day; that to rejoice in a brother-author's success is a sign of a lost soul; that to breathe muttered curses when you pass a man whose book has sold better than yours is only a fitting tribute to self-respect. Oh, yes, I have had all these things drummed into me for some time past. But in spite of them, "friends all," as they say in the Salvation Army, we have to put our house in order and change our literary note, for it does not ring true.

It is difficult to be cheerful when the butcher sends in that curious literary document, his "little account"; when your tailor writes nasty things in that bastard language known as "tailor's English," when your wife wants a new dress and your trousers bag at the knees, when the children have the whooping-cough and the man next door turns on his gramophone, when your friends won't buy the new book, when old loves prove unkind and new ones false—oh, yes, it is difficult enough to preserve the Mark Tapley attitude toward literature in these circumstances. Yet there is everything to be gained by optimism in the literary life, for pessimism, looked at from the base standpoint of paying or not paying, does not pay.

Of course, there are many literary pessimists who start with a bad liver as their stock in trade, and become bad livers themselves. They tell you that their outlook is influenced by their digestion. Well, then, it is their

broken men. Into its narrow neck are crammed all the hurrying life, the passions, the eager beating hearts, the happiness and the sorrow of the broad streets east and west that lead to it. There is something in this thin, crooked street, holding in its body the essence of the world, that clutches at the imagination, something in the very atmosphere surrounding it which makes it different from all other streets that are walked by men."

duty to worry their digestion, and not that long-patient reading public which wants to be happy, interested, amused. The author with indigestion cannot digest anything himself, so makes the public swallow all his megrims.

William Archer, who is one of the sanest men I know, did the literary world a bad turn when he helped to make Ibsen popular. Your cheerful young author got hold of Ibsen's plays, studied them, couldn't write a cheerful story to save his life, and began to think he had everything the matter with him except housemaid's knee; that seems to be the one ailment on which the great Ibsen has not touched. Housemaid's knee is getting into literature, and the creed of most pessimistic young authors can be summed up in the old joke of: "What is mind? No matter. What is matter? Never mind. What is the soul? It is quite immaterial."

Since writing the above, I met a young author in Fleet Street, a man whose smile formerly would have melted the heart of a cannibal. "It's a cursed trade writing books," he said bitterly; "but we're not fit for anything else. Still, I've got something new. People are tired of that light-hearted rot of yours; they want something nasty, something gloomy, something that'll make 'em go to bed feeling as if they hadn't a friend in the world. I'm writing a novel now, and the hero is a cheerful beast like you. I'm going to let him prosper right up to the end of the book. He's to marry an earl's daughter, come into a pot of money, win the Derby, and then, the night before the marriage, I intend to make the villain throw him down a sewer for the rats to eat. That'll worry people, make 'em nervous when they see road repairs going on; that——" "Why?" I asked.

"Oh, all the other chaps are doing it," he said feebly; "and I mean to get even with the world for not making me rich and prosperous. That's why I'm a pessimist."*

* There are many definitions of optimists and pessimists. Hamilton Fyfe declared at a dinner to Dr. Orchard that a pessimist is a man who wears braces as well as a belt; someone else said that an optimist is a man who buys an article from a Jew in the hope of selling it at a profit to a Scotchman.

“ Well, but,” I gently suggested, “ although it’s rather a truism, we have something to do for the world before the world will do anything for us. The world has its own worries; why should we add to them by writing ghastly pessimistic books? Why depress it? Why make it long to commit crimes, rob it of all sweetness and light? Why do this to the world and expect the world to bless us instead of turning round and telling us in plain—very plain—English what it thinks of us? ”

He did not know.

“ Suppose you give up this toying with death and decay and try to bring a smile to quivering lips, make people believe that Love is immortal, that clean, honest laughter is a gift of the gods, that in the printed page we can help the world to forget its sorrows, its difficulties, its failures, its worries! What miserable writing folk we are to think of our own petty selves! As long as God gives us a crust and the appetite to be thankful for it, the power to lighten the burdens of one human being, what have we to complain about? It is sweet to sit at meat in high places, it is sweet to enjoy the luxuries of life, sweet to win the homage of the crowd, the adulation of beautiful women, of wise men; but it is just as sweet, and perhaps sweeter, to receive a letter from a starving lad in a garret saying that he was about to put out the lamp of life, and a chance word which you wrote straight from your heart to his, has given him the courage to struggle on.”

It is raining now. The grim grey skies refuse to smile, the wind pierces to the marrow. Still it rains, rains, rains. Sometimes I think this rain but typifies the tears a despairing God must shed over the follies of the creatures He has made. The earth swallows them, as it will one day swallow us. To the pessimist, God’s tears flow for ever; to the optimist, they cleanse earth of its pain.

CHAPTER X.

MINOR WANDERINGS

SOME time ago I ventured into the realm of workmen's cottages at Edmonton—a place which, up to that moment, I had not associated with "Labour." In my mind were hallowed associations connected with John Gilpin, "pothecary Keats," and gentle Elia. But the British Workman has ousted these haunting spirits. He has squatted in his thousands all round the ancient churchyard, he wanders past Lamb's cottage carolling his lays of labour, and as for Keats—I could find no trace of him.

Elia's is a pretty little wood cottage, quaint with the quaintness of age and literary association, and stands some distance back from the road. On each side of the centre walk is a bed of flowers, and a tall holly runs up to the first-floor window. The cottage itself, a lightish yellow, is jammed against a bigger house.

The courteous mistress of Lamb's Cottage appeared in the arched hall, which led to another hall, and, taking my card from the maid, kindly asked me to follow her into the quaint little dining-room to the left. The oak-raftered room had been papered over; there was a fireplace later than Lamb's time, and at the end of the room, facing the window, stood a cupboard which ran back behind the fireplace, and is supposed to be the place where Mary Lamb was temporarily confined until Charles could take her across the fields to the asylum at Winchmore Hill. You remember how one bright summer morning someone met the brother and sister walking across the fields hand in hand, weeping as they neared the asylum. The birds sang, the sweet sun shone down upon them, the flowers bloomed

beneath their feet, and all the beauty and joy of the world were as naught in the face of the mysterious terror which had come upon poor Mary Lamb!

A window of the dining-room overlooked the dear old garden. The ground floor of the cottage was nearly a couple of feet below the level of the garden, and this window, when open, commanded a view of a huge apple tree which bears heavy crops year after year. A few years ago, before the coming of Labour, a nightingale sang in the apple tree night after night, and in the depths of winter a stray cock-pheasant came for food.

The front room on the first floor made a curious old drawing-room. A beam ran across the middle as if it had once been two rooms, and on the landing opposite this room was another, now used as a bedroom. This was the original room in which Mary Lamb slept, and my hostess remembered her brother having the iron bars removed from the window—bars which had been placed there lest Mary Lamb should throw herself out—because in the event of fire an old wooden house like this would burn very quickly and escape might be cut off. The staircase was also very old, and made of perfectly plain boarding instead of rails. In fact, it looked as if it were fashioned out of the sides of a family pew. All the rooms had low ceilings, but the windows admitted plenty of light.

In the outer hall were admirable portraits of Charles and Mary Lamb, and the drawing-room contained several good etchings of the cottage. The inner hall had bookshelves at one end, and you can imagine Lamb's folios reposing there. The American visitor, as a rule, wants to know all that local tradition has to tell about the Lambs, and one enthusiastic dweller from over the seas insisted on buying a modern pewter pot at "The Bell" because Charles Lamb must have drunk out of one like it. Indeed, Americans evince far more interest in Lamb's Cottage than we do. Some day they will buy it, have it taken to pieces, number the pieces, and remove it to America—a proceeding which will greatly upset the gifted A. V. Lucas, one of Lamb's most assiduous chroniclers.

From this little cottage the Lambs wandered about in all weathers, and were accustomed to visit Leigh Hunt as far away as Hampstead. Who does not remember Hunt's epistle to Lamb:—

For when the sad winds told us rain would come down,
Or snow upon snow fairly clogged up the town,
And dun, yellow fogs brooded over its white,
So that scarcely a being was seen towards night,
Then, then said the lady yclept near and dear:
Now, mind what I tell you, the Lambs will be here.

When seated in the quaint old dining-room, I tried to put Elia into the opposite seat and chat with him about the changes which have overtaken his earthly home. Did Lamb himself love this quaint old room, or merely regard the cottage as a place in which to hang up his hat? It is only when noticing how little it has changed with the passing years, that one understands how it has gradually become expressive of Elia and his sister. But modern houses and modern furniture are so much alike that they cannot express anyone's individuality. In self-defence we shall have to start an author's individuality company, and go about collecting time-worn materials with which to construct houses to match authors. When "Kuppaleen Sahib" built himself a home in Vermont, he had an inspiration. Noticing that the walls dividing the fields were made of loose stones, he caused the stones to be built into the house with the mossy sides outwards, and the result would have pleased even Ruskin.

It is a far cry from Edmonton to the Quai de Conti. "Pardon, Monsieur, mais——!" That is what comes of spending a fortnight in Paris. It rather reminds me of the Academician who once stayed three weeks in Paris, and for the rest of his life spoke broken English with a French shrug of his shoulders, and a stereotyped: "Pardon, Monsieur, but I do not spik well ze damn English."

As I strolled along the Quai de Conti, with its thousands of books, I wanted to hire a couple of rooms in the Quartier Latin and try to persuade myself that I was young again and could write as charmingly of it as my friend, that

admirable master of the short story, Leonard Merrick. The Quai lies opposite the Ile de la Cité, and is memorable on account of Napoleon having occupied a room on the top floor of No. 13. It has the customary rather thick, square-topped parapet; but what is not customary is to find this parapet covered the whole length with shallow boxes about a foot deep. In the daytime the lids of these boxes are thrown back and a miscellaneous collection of second-hand books is exposed to view. The proprietor sits on a stool, or an old chair without any bottom to it, and reads his journal. At night, when it is time to go home, he, in the most ingenious way, avoids the necessity of taking his somewhat dilapidated stock with him. Each section of book boxes is arranged in a row. On the lid of every box is a big staple; through this staple the proprietor passes a long, iron bar and secures the boxes with a couple of locks. No one in his senses would attempt to cart away ten or fifteen yards of boxes just for the fun of stealing them; and so the proprietor trudges off with the consciousness that he need not worry about his stock.

You can get out of these boxes every kind of literature except English novels. There is, however, a French edition of Sir Walter Scott, which is to be met with all along the Quai. Molière and Victor Hugo, and all the other French classics, are to be found in abundance. I did not, however, see a single volume of those world-renowned works of which we think so much in London. After all, when one comes to consider it, fame is purely local. I remember my friend Israel Zangwill once saying—it was in his early days—that he went to stay at a certain boarding-house. "When I got there," he remarked naively, "no one had ever heard of me; when I went away everyone had heard of me. I took care of that."

For the sum of sevenpence I became the proud possessor of a battered piece of canvas on which some student, an exquisite artist, had depicted an open book with a lighted candle on top of it. In spite of the dirt which covered the picture, the candle looked so real that I could not refrain from purchasing it. Now the picture has been

cleaned up and framed. The frame cost me four and sixpence, and the candle confronts me in my "den" as a souvenir of my walk along the Quai de Conti. The old woman who sold it to me said that she purchased it from a starving art student, who had threatened to throw himself into the Seine unless she did so. What she gave him, if she could afford to sell it to me for less than a franc, Heaven only knows, and probably would not like to tell. When we had finished our negotiations over this great work of art, the old woman who owned the boxes at which I was looking, pulled out her *Figaro* and proceeded to discuss "Les Anglais à Paris."

By a curious coincidence, the *Figaro* led off with an article entitled "Journal de Route d'un jeune Anglais à Paris," and the old lady, with much energy and gesticulation, read out to me the following paragraph:—

Jeudi, mon père, master John Broadbread, un honorable tisseur de Spitalfields, m'a pris à part, après le luncheon. Il m'a dit: "James, vous êtes un charmant garçon (a very nice boy). Voici trois mois que, pour vous, je verse cinq shillings la semaine à la caisse du Club's Excursions des voyages, de Thomas Cook and Sons. Après demain, vous partirez pour trois jours à Paris. Restez-y fidèle à Miss Edith, votre fiancée, et sachez juger sainement les Français. Voici cinq livres pour vous, mon cher garçon. Allez; observez si des progrès utilisables ont été réalisés dans le tissage, et revenez aussitôt, ayant bien vu, sain de corps et d'esprit. Ma bénédiction vous accompagne."

The old lady thought "les Anglais" very, very eccentric, and that this eccentricity of the average Englishman arose mainly from ignorance of the average Frenchman and French customs. To start with, the average Englishman entered Paris with the idea that morality did not exist, and that he was at liberty without an introduction to speak to every charming girl he met. Then we came to the paragraph in the *Figaro* which supported her view of the situation:—

Justement passait une charming girl, blonde et delicate. Une envie folle m'a pris et—Edith, Miss Edith, je ne vous ferai point lire ce passage de mon journal—je me suis dit: "Je vais aller faire un petit compliment à la petite femme." En sifflant le Rule Britannia, je me suis approché, puis, tout d'un coup intimidé, je lui ai chuchoté avec une prononciation detestable:—"Ma belle, voulez-vous que j'offre

à vous un petit souper ? ” Elle m’a regarde, étonné, un peu sévère. “ Vous vous trompez, monsieur ! ” Puis elle s’est mise à rire, la jolie Parisienne, devant mon air déconfit—à rire, à rire très fort. Damn it ! J’ai reçu un coup de poing au cœur, à entendre sonner ces rires. J’ai tellement honte que je suis aussitôt rentré à l’hotel, la tête baisse. Miss Edith, Miss Edith, dans trois jours, je vous rapporterais un cœur fidèle. Et bous le devrez à une Parisienne !

On my return from Paris, I received the following invitation from a literary friend at—well, we will call it Exminster. “ Dear B.—Come over and shoot your brother Bunny.” Now I have never been much of a sportsman except in a literary sense. In novels, I have slain my thousands and tens of thousands, not with the jawbone of Scripture, but with the aid of Stephen’s blue-black. My soul was weary of the inky world, so I joyfully accepted my literary friend’s invitation, and it was not until I had entered the train at Liverpool Street that I noticed an ominous postscript to his letter. “ Please remember that all the etceteras of my small estate are literary copyright.”

In the dim light of a cold, grey December night, four travellers might have been seen (had anyone cared to look at them) wending their way out of the Exminster Station. The primitive conveyance which awaited us in the growing darkness was the local carrier’s cart. The local carrier cheerfully informed us that “ it were a matter of seven mile to Exminster,” and he thought he could do the distance in an hour.

We reached my friend’s cottage about eight o’clock, and immediately proceeded to eat three times as much as was good for us. Then my host took me up to my bedroom and told me that I would be called at eight o’clock sharp by The Henchman, an interesting youth of some ten summers, who helped with the cooking, which was taken in turns by various distinguished literary lights.

We awoke right early. My friend, equipped with shooting boots and gaiters, somewhat dubiously asked me if I wanted to shoot. I indignantly replied that nothing was further from my intention than slaughtering innocent rabbits, and the other members of the party looked relieved.

After an appetising breakfast we were joined by a rural individual in the porch with uneasily bulging pockets. "What's that?" I asked, as a mean-looking head peered out of one of the pockets. "That be the ferret, zur," said this rustic individual. And from that time I gave him a wide berth, for of all loathsome things in this otherwise cheerful world the ferret is the worst. Even Eve, if she had been told in the Garden that she might eat that ferret, would have scorned to touch him and have swallowed the serpent instead.

Though it rained all day, nobody except myself seemed to mind a trifle like that, and, after carefully lifting one ploughed field on to the top of another ploughed field with our feet, we settled down to business and took up our stations on each side of a hedge, I prudently electing to go behind the Literary Light's gun in case of accidents. Then we threw out flanking parties at some distance from the hedge in case he missed anything. He said paternally: "You see, if you're just behind me, you'll be out of the line of fire, and literature will not lose one of its most valued ornaments. Besides, you can carry the sandwiches. There'll be a boy coming along in about two hours with a gallon of beer. You can carry that, too, if you like—externally."

The Nature's nobleman with the "furrets" incautiously let them touch one another, whereupon they fought vigorously and had to be cuffed into subjection. The yellow ferret was then turned into a burrow, while the second one, tied to a string, investigated a hole and was dragged out again—a proceeding which he resented with uncommon bitterness. He cheered up presently after another fight with the other ferret.

What hurt me most was the contumelious attitude of the fox-terrier, who seemed to think that because I was not carrying a gun I had no business to be there, although I pointed out to him that sandwiches were quite as important as guns. In his excitement, the terrier nearly met with righteous retribution, for, instead of staying quietly to heel, he bolted after something in grey which came out of a

hole and rapidly disappeared along the ditch as if it had an important engagement a mile away. The terrier narrowly escaped a charge of shot as the rabbit came out into the open and died with his scut to the foe. Then the Literary Light asked me if I would like to carry the dead rabbits in addition to the sandwiches, and I declined to do anything of the sort.

Every now and again the yellow ferret came out of a hole, looked at me with a grin of dislike, and went back again. There was a scurry in the hedge, and a rabbit broke cover, only to be bowled over by one of the guns. It seemed a tremendous array of talent and ingenuity to circumvent one small coney; but unless you had ferrets, the rabbits, very sensibly, declined to come out.

After slaying some twenty rabbits, we sat down in a ditch—it was still raining!—and had lunch. The beer brought to us by a knock-kneed youth in a gallon jar was pure nectar, although it had a little mud in it. You cannot go over Essex ploughed land without getting mud all over you, inside and out.

After lunch, the Literary Light insisted that if I wished to regain the fox-terrier's respect I must take a gun and slaughter rabbits, and I regret to say I killed five rabbits. There was one old grey one with a white streak on his nose, who irresistibly reminded me of an ancient foe on "The —." I blew his head off at ten yards, and assisted at making him into soup the next evening. After this slaughter, like the weary ploughman, we wended our way home in the rapidly gathering gloom of the December afternoon. Over the Blackwater River the gulls wheeled and made night mournful with their cries. And the rain rained on!

At night we "put on" pipes and cigarettes and talked shop and what a good thing it was to kill rabbits by way of a change. Someone said that a chronic restlessness afflicts the "lit'ry gent" when his ideas begin to be played out. The mere notion of doing the same things every day puts him off his work. To eat the same food, see the same faces, do the same stroll, or golf links, or a bicycle ride—

all these constitute purgatory. He cannot do his work. He must pack up and go on to "the old trail, the old trail, the trail that is always new."

One fine morning your literary youngster slips his collar, leaves the paternal kennel, and follows the trail. Sometimes he comes back again; sometimes he does not. Once the fever of wandering gets into his blood it may never get out. Like Kipling's gentlemen rankers, he belongs to "a cohort of the damned"; but in this case he is damned by restlessness—that physical and mental restlessness which is a kind of policeman always urging him to "move on."

Very often, when once this wandering mania gets into his blood, he cannot write a line, but moves on and on and on until he comes

To the Land of the Hereafter, to the land of the Ponema.

The last "literary wanderer" I met was tending cattle on a Canadian cattle ship. In the intervals of "bedding down" numberless cattle he pulled out a greasy pocket book and read me the story of his return, after many years, to "the old home," prefacing it with the well-known verse from Kipling:—

For to admire an' for to see,
 For to be'old this world so wide—
 It never done no good to me,
 But I can't drop it if I tried.

"About the last illusion left to the literary world-wanderer is the place of his birth. Its waters were sweeter, its streets fairer, its men braver, its women more beautiful than anywhere else under Heaven. He sees it—in imagination—as he roams the earth. All these dreams of his early youth are disappointing; there is no reality in them. He treads the halls of Haroun al Raschid, and—they are not as imposing as the princely edifices of Leicester Square; he sees the Eastern houri, that miracle of loveliness—she is a bedraggled, painted hag, bisected by a girdle, down at heels, and full of a quaint wisdom which leads her to conceal such stupendous ugliness from the

giaour. He roams in other climes, and there is something lacking; but, at last, middle-aged, bronzed with travel, heart-weary, stripped of most of his ideals, the wanderer returns to his native town. This, at least, is left to him.

“ He recalls the meadows wherein he played, the stately houses with their pleasant gardens, the boys and girls, now middle-aged men and women, the lofty hill up which he climbed to school, the ancient churchyard wherein repose his hallowed dead, the market place, sacred each Saturday to scurrying sheep and fatted beeves, and his heart is glad within him. So shall he drink of the waters of youth and drop from his weary shoulders the mantle of the years; so shall he wander at eve beside the ancient stream, communing with his dead; so shall he, looking into the starry heavens, see the same beacons of his boyhood; so shall he still the pain at his heart, the restless longing for a voice that he will never hear again. It is good to be alive, to feel the joy of one's lost youth. ‘ A boy's way is the wind's way,’ but it is sweet for all that. Ambition, glory, fame, the constant devotion to these shadows of a dream, have filled the days of life; now he will sit down beside the waters of Babylon and weep for all that he has lost; now he will arise and go to his father's house, break bread there once again, purge his soul of earth and all its dross. Now—but what is that?

“ He has left the station at the foot of the hill. Discordant shrieks of wild, barbaric yauping music break upon his ear. It is ‘ Fair Time.’ On either side of the hill are booths and merry-go-rounds—people mounted upon strange birds, the like of which never were on sea or land. Scurrying, sweat-begrimed men rattle whips in their hands to stimulate jaded horses to unreal speed. Over all is a canopy of dust, beneath all the penetrating odour of fried fish. The road is ankle-deep in dust; the boys and girls who throw confetti at him as he passes onward are not the boys and girls of long ago. They are not so fair; their manners are more boisterous; many of them have had too much to drink. Their raucous shouts rend the air; they speak in an alien tongue as he passes upward to the town

eager to see the time-stained fronts of the houses, eager to tread the old familiar places.

“ At the top of the hill the dame’s school is no more. The dust lies thick upon the pavement, the High Street is hardly wide enough for carts to pass one another, drunken men run into bicyclists, and are taken away by equally drunken friends. The venerable inn, as big as a cathedral—the inn which accommodated sixty coaches a day in its youth—has been stuccoed over. The stucco peels in strips, leaving it as forlornly naked as a London plane tree; its windows are disfigured with legends of cheap teas. Shabbiness is writ large everywhere. Stay! There is the church!

“ The church, with its beacon light on the top, has been rebuilt. Behind it the old God’s Acre is a mass of dusty trees; the gates are locked. She who rests there, the idol of his youth, must hear ribald blasphemy and drover’s song, must shudder in her grave at this shrieking pandemonium, this world of worried beasts and panting kine. He remembers the day that she was laid to rest, the cool, grey shadows from the old walls, the gentle sunshine comforting his sad heart, the sweet-faced vicar, the lowering of the coffin into the flower-lined grave, the last fond look ere he turned away to wander the world without her. Can she hear him now? Can she see him? Does she know him, this furrowed, weary wanderer, this mechanical maker of books who clings to the iron railings, the salt tears stinging his eyes, his heart full of a sorrow too deep for words. He hears her sweet, low voice, sees her Madonna face and radiant eyes, remembers the world that opened to him when she first took him by the hand, the world that shut to him for ever when she went her journey of all days.

“ Since then he has wandered in many lands, has seen men and things, has lived his life to the uttermost; and yet, as he stands by the iron railings, the dust choking him, the shouting crowds passing onward to the Fair, the roar of the distant music rending his ears—all these things blend into one and fade away as if they were not. He is in a

cool and verdant churchyard, the old houses on either side showing dimly through the dust; he is holding Her hand, feeling that it unlocks for him the gates of Heaven, and——

“Heaven is very far away, although the blue sky, seen through a haze of dust, seems lower than of yore. The literary World Wanderer pulls himself together with an effort as a man looks at him curiously, then gives a startled cry of recognition. ‘You, at last! I thought you were dead.’

“‘Yes,’ he answers dully, turning away without seeing the outstretched hand, ‘I am dead.’ He knows now that he died when the first spadeful of earth fell softly into that flower-lined grave.”

* * * * *

The all-pervading stench of cattle filled our nostrils, the restless waves lapped against the sides of the ship, but the literary cattle-man gazed into the past and heard nothing. “And you can lead this sort of life without a murmur?” I began, when suddenly a stentorian voice shouted through the darkness of the hold: “You, Jim Baker, you ain’t bedded down that piebald bull, and he’s a-horning the roan heifer next to him.”

The literary World Wanderer caught up a pitchfork and engaged in a vocal duet with the piebald bull. His adjectives were masterly!

CHAPTER XI.

POPULARITY VERSUS STYLE

STEVENSON says that there are three ways only of writing a story. You may take a plot and fit characters to it, or you may take a character and choose incidents and situations to develop it, or you may take a certain atmosphere and get actions and persons to express and realise it. But sometimes a story has a knack of writing itself irrespective of every known rule of construction and character. In that case it is always better to let the characters have their own way. If you do not, they go on strike. You may remember Burnett Smith's story of the man who returned home late from the Club in a condition of bibulous vagueness. When he knocked at his door a window opened and, in acidulated tones, his wife asked him where he had been. "Been at the Club, my love, dishkussin' the Strike." "Then," said she, "you may sit on the doorstep till to-morrow morning and study the lock-out." When an author tries to argue with his characters, metaphorically speaking, they leave him on the doorstep, and all the bad language in the world will not ease his forlorn situation.

Another authority on style has declared that it is the art of saying the best thing in the best possible way. Style is the man—the something in a man which differentiates him from every other man. If authors were all alike, an author factory might be started and the resulting products be sold by the yard. But there is in every man and woman a something which belongs to him or her alone. If he or she can convey this something to paper and make other people

see it, the readers say to themselves: "Oh, this is different from the book I read yesterday. This writer's story is different. Something is put before me in a way which only this particular writer has discovered."

I am moved to these profound reflections by a letter in which the writer says: "I wish you'd tell me whether it is better to write in the most perfect form and reach about a hundred people, or whether it is better to write imperfectly and appeal to millions?"

This is a little difficult, and brings us back to the "greatest pleasure of the greatest number." There are certain recognised canons of art—canons recognised by the experts, that is—which are necessary to an author before he can achieve greatness. Suppose an author obeys all these canons and achieves greatness in the estimation of, say, a hundred experts. He may possibly have added to their happiness, and that is all. Now, take the case of your emotional, self-educated man, who sits down and writes a crude story in bad English and yet with "heart" in it. The "literary crowd" will sneer; it will give no pleasure to the experts; but some poor suffering man or woman who could not understand the work of art reads it, is comforted, helped, soothed. Another poor person does the same thing, the book spreads, thousands take comfort in it. Now, when you come to consider the ultimate rightness of things, which of the two writers has done the most for the world—the man who produces the artistic masterpiece which the world does not understand, or the man who writes a book full of faults which the world can understand?

Truly, the greatest man is the man who helps the world most. True art is not always the most helpful. In perfecting the form, the writer sometimes loses sight of the substance. When R. L. Stevenson died he was getting into a state of morbid fastidiousness, twisted and changed and altered, and sent for his "copy" back from the printers until at last they declined to return it any more. He was writing with one eye on "the educated crowd" and the other on posterity.

My friend, Eden Phillpotts, once wrote to me with reference to his life work:—

Twenty years doesn't seem a very long time to men who work as hard as we do and keep away from their looking glasses—and all other glasses.

With "Widdicombe Fair," the curtain falls on the last long instalment of my modest Dartmoor epic. I set out twenty years ago to write it—when I was thirty; and now it's done and I am fifty, I wish it was to do again, for I might make something of all that vast material. One unknown friend in all the wide world of letters wrote to me (from Chicago), and said: "Well done." It was jolly to think that even one man was pleased and cared.

The author who does most good in the world is the one who appeals most to the world's workers, not to the elegant few. The elegant few must write for one another; the worker must write for the worker. The "elegant" writer is annoyed because he makes less money than the "popular" writer; the popular writer is recognised as a "pot boiler," and immediately craves for recognition as a great artist. The "elegant writer" sighs for the shekels of the "pot boiler"; and thus the world wags. We always want something we do not possess. That is why we want it.

A certain popular writer of Sunday School fame resolved to live in town and mix with his fellow-authors. To his great surprise, they had never heard of him or his work, and said that if he wished to obtain literary recognition he must begin again. He thought out the situation, and—returned to the country.

There are "many mansions" in the writing craft, and they all have their uses. Only, let us be frank with ourselves and not cry out for the impossible. If the world wishes us to clown amusingly, let us clown, and not offer it our Hamlet. Authors, like other people, have to live. "Pot boilers" pay; therefore authors must sometimes write "pot boilers." It is a noble thing to write a "pot boiler" if you will frankly admit that it is one; it is an ignoble thing to write a "pot boiler" and to be ashamed of having done so.

The conscientious writer must recognise that there is a mysterious force in him which enables him to write. Let

him go on writing in the best way he can without stopping to think of posterity. The more he keeps his eye on posterity, the less posterity will keep its eye on him. The craving for "greatness" is littleness in its most abject form. Just think, fellow-writer, little insect on a leaf that you are, what is going to become of you when the wind of Time blows you away into the Unknown. Before you have perfected your theories of Art, the Undertaker waits, and your "copy" is not ready. Better do the best you can as you go along, not worry about "greatness," but insensibly achieve it. Nothing you can do will make you great if you do it with the desire to be great. But if you see a child crying by the roadside and take that child on your knee and tell it a story which makes it forget to cry, you have done something which will tell in your favour when you meet the Great Reviewer.

Are we not all children by the roadside crying to be comforted, waiting for the comforters? Our toys break, familiar doors are shut to us, we sit down in the dust and weep, and then:—

As a fond mother, when the day is o'er,
Leads by the hand her little child to bed,
Half-willing, half-reluctant to be led
And leave his broken playthings on the floor,
Still gazing at them through the open door,
Nor wholly reassured and comforted
Which, though more splendid, may not please him more;
So Nature deals with us, and takes away
By promises of others in their stead,
Our playthings one by one, and by the hand
Leads us so gently that we go,
Scarce knowing if we wish to go or stay,
Being too full of sleep to understand
How far the unknown transcends the what we know!

So many of us must live. Very well. We will continue to live if we think it necessary; but don't let us be humbugs. If we find ourselves involved in continued expenses for appearances' sake and write "pot boilers" to pay our rents and dinners and things, we should not go about calling ourselves ill-used geniuses. Read H. G. Wells's "Love and Mr. Lewisham," and decide which it is to be—

a career or the domestic virtues. But when you choose the domestic virtues, and write "pot boilers" to keep them going, and the voice of genius occasionally reproaches you in the night-watches, do not turn on your pillow and make moan to the gods that they have ill-used you because you have been false to yourself. Make your choice and stick to it, and learn from your Red Indian brother to bear your lot in silence.

How long, how long, in infinite pursuit
Of this and that, endeavour and dispute?

Did I say the Red Indian? Take a more modern instance—our white brother. The Man Who Made Sweet Songs on Birch Bark and cast them on the Waters of Time to float to the great Manitou—the man who sat at the source of the river of human knowledge—the man who sat there for decades unrecognised, unknown, unsought, until a still, small voice in the land whispered "George Meredith"; and the world arose and did homage at the feet of one who could wait and perfect his art without a thought of self.

I have been sternly reproached for saying nothing in my previous book about George Meredith, but I had a very good reason for doing so. When I was sub-editing *The Idler*, a certain "lady" interviewer went to see him in his cottage at Box Hill and omitted to state that she was an interviewer. Thinking that she was paying him just an ordinary friendly visit, Mr. Meredith, in an unguarded moment, said things to her which afterward gave him great pain when they appeared in print. Of course, it was a gross breach of faith to record the utterances of a man who supposed that he was merely speaking to a friend. But I do not think that I violate any confidence of Mr. Meredith's by repeating some statements he made many years ago to a woman friend of mine in the course of an afternoon chat. Now that Mr. Meredith is dead, they cannot hurt anybody.

In the course of conversation with my friend, Mr. Meredith said that he had strong views on the marriage question, and did not think the permanence of marriage should for some be insisted on until the parties had had

experience of each other and discovered whether or not they were mutually sympathetic in every way. He believed that all marriages should be undertaken for a period of five years, the contract to be renewable by such as desired for further periods of five years until the woman reached fifty, after which no husband would have the right to put her away.

When asked what was to become of the children of unions so temporary, Mr. Meredith said that from the time of the birth of every child its father should be made to put money either in a bank or another place of investment for it, and would have to keep up these payments until the child reached the age of twenty-one. This would act as a restraint on men and keep them from the idea that fatherhood could be entered upon lightly. He added: "I shouldn't tell a journalist that I hold these opinions, because I don't want to bring down an avalanche of condemnation on my head. I tell them only to you."

Later, public opinion on the subject broadened, and Mr. Meredith allowed a portion of these ideas to become associated with his name. He ended the conversation by referring to the question of church-going. "Why won't I go to church? Well, I'll tell you. It's because there are no women clergy. When there's a woman preacher, you will get me to come with you to church, but not before."

Anyone wishing to obtain an admirable description of Mr. Meredith's personal appearance and his surroundings at Flint Cottage, especially the little intimate touches concerning the chalet where the great novelist did most of his work, will find much enlightening information on the subject in my friend Joseph Shaylor's forthcoming book, "Sixty Years a Bookseller." He records how an address was presented to Mr. Meredith by The Whitefriars Club, which stated, among other things: "The work you have done has become a part of English life and of our personal lives. It represents the highest blossom of the Tree of Civilisation, and it has come to mean so much that to-day no man or woman can attain to a maturity of culture without having absorbed your teaching and your spirit."

I wonder whether that still applies. Kingdoms rise and fall; so do novelists. It may cause a regretful pang to Miss Maude Royden and many other gifted women preachers that they were born too late to gratify Mr. Meredith's desire to see a woman in the pulpit. "Did you ever hear me preach?" Coleridge once asked Lamb. "I n-n-never heard you do anything else," stuttered Lamb.

Before closing this chapter, I should like to say a few words about another great novelist who, happily for the world, is still with us—Thomas Hardy.

Our greatest living novelist is a shy man, and has always steadfastly set his face against notoriety. It would be interesting to know the number of interviewers and journalists who have vainly endeavoured to interview him in his Dorset home, for, above all things, Thomas Hardy will never talk about himself or his work.

There is a story of a beautiful and charming American girl who stopped Hardy on the high road just outside his own gate. "Mr. Hardy, I believe?" she queried.

Hardy shook his head.

"But surely?" she persisted.

"Aren't you mistaken?" suggested Hardy.

"Anyway, you're the very image of him. See right here now"; and she produced a rather creased newspaper portrait of Hardy.

The novelist looked at it attentively. "His misfortune," he remarked, and, raising his hat, strode rapidly away.

What a wonderful octogenarian he is, although a little beginning to feel the weight of years! But he walks much, and, if the weather is fine, may often be seen on Market Day talking to his Wessex folk. Occasionally he is drawn into public life and attends the performances of the Wessex players, who have presented half-a-dozen or so of his stories in dramatic form.

Mr. Thomas Hardy lovers often ask themselves if there will ever be another novel from his pen. Probably not, although there may be an unfinished novel or two in the cupboards of his quiet study. The reception by the critics of "Jude the Obscure" did not a little to turn the novelist

away from fiction and convert him into a great poet. There is little doubt in my mind that the lack of comprehension meted out to "Jude" cut the novelist to the quick.

In this shy, diffident man there is a heart of gold, a great humanity and tenderness.

At one time my friend, Clive Holland, saw a good deal of Thomas Hardy. He was cycling with him in a remote portion of Dorset when they came to a little village where Hardy was well known, and where, at a certain cottage, he invariably had a cup of tea. A girl sat sewing in the parlour, and the tea was brought. Clive Holland looked at the girl sewing and said: "If I guess aright, that's your wedding dress?" The girl blushed, smiled, and admitted the fact, whereupon Hardy laughed. "I should never have guessed. Holland, you must be a Sherlock Holmes." Then he asked the girl if a date had been fixed for the wedding. The date was not long distant; Hardy promised to attend it, and, although wild horses could not have dragged him to a fashionable function, he did so.

It is frequently said by critics as well as readers, that Thomas Hardy is a profound pessimist. So, in a sense, he is, for he believes that the Fates play a great part in human destinies. Underlying almost all his novels is that tragic note of inevitability which has not a little to do with their cumulative force and effect.

In the evening of his days he is still occupied with literary interests. May he long continue to be so.

CHAPTER XII.

SOME "NEW VAGABOND" STORIES

FOR a great many years of my life it has been my fate to be secretary to various clubs, literary and otherwise. In one instance I was paid; in the others I was not, except by the receipt of an occasional travelling bag, or a testimonial setting forth my innumerable virtues but kindly dumb as to my equally innumerable demerits. These secretaryships broadened my views, brought me into contact with many interesting friends, made me one or two less interesting enemies, and invariably gave me a prodigious amount of hard work which might have been more profitably spent on other things. On the whole, however, taking it "by and large," I do not regret them.

Although I am no believer in future punishment—life itself is frequently a sufficient punishment for any sin we may be tempted to commit—my theory is that Heaven apportions us our deserts as we go along in what Mrs. Gamp calls "this wale," and that, personally, having committed some direful crimes in a former state of existence, I worked out my salvation as secretary of The New Vagabonds. When I say that we are punished as we go along, I exclude myself, because in my last stage as a beetle, or whatever it was, I must have accumulated a reserve fund of punishment with which Providence was unable to cope until I assumed a less energetic form.

Of course, the first difficulty about a Club which gives dinners is the Guest of the Evening. The Club also gave two dinners a year to the wives and guests of the members,

in order to propitiate the ladies and thus make them more merciful to their husbands when the latter returned from the ordinary dinners. I wrote to the more prominent ladies who took an interest in the Club's welfare, and they all wrote back, each suggesting a different guest. One wanted her chiropodist because "he was so handsome"; another suggested "that man who tells fortunes in Bond Street"; a third asked for the Countess of X because "I have never seen a real live countess"; and a fourth named "the dear Archbishop because he is so sweet." When I got a dozen suggestions like that I put them before the Committee, and the Committee made another dozen on its own account. Out of the twenty-four we gradually came down to three, and when we tried the three they were all engaged.

We began again, and at last everyone was happy. I got a blank plan of the seats, spread it out on an extra table in my "den," and issued a politely-worded notice that unless members paid up their subscriptions they could not have any tickets. If they wished to come to the dinner, the members sent their subscriptions, and when I took a handful of small cheques to the Bank the cashier there wanted to know how long we had been saving up these vast amounts. I cannot add up things, and it worried this cashier if he found out I made nine and seven equal fourteen instead of sixteen. He suggested ready reckoners and all that sort of thing, and made out a fresh slip for me. He also said, with a tired look in his eyes, that he had only twenty-six years more to serve before he got his retiring allowance, but that when I came into the Bank with a bundle of small cheques, fifteen or twenty postal orders, and four-and-three in coppers, Heaven seemed very far away. His grief made me so sad that I offered to resign; but he asked me not to, because he would have to educate the next man, and life was not long enough.

Letters began to pour in. Everyone wanted the best places; people always do. And they sit down and worry out how they can get them. Someone who is no one will ask a guest who is someone, and writes that this distin-

guished guest must sit next to the guest of the evening and he himself must have the next place. Someone else has a father who once read a book of the guest of the evening, and feels almost a relation. Another member suggests bringing his album of celebrated signatures, and expects to sit in the seat of honour "so as to bag a lot." The member with the pretty wife who writes society columns must also sit in the lap of the principal guest. And there was always the old lady who wanted a warming-pan or a foot-warmer (sometimes it was one, sometimes the other) for her husband "because he is deaf." Her undying faith in my power to evoke foot-warmers and warming-pans from my inner consciousness, even as a conjurer produces live rabbits from the recesses of his person, touched me almost to tears. I offered to lend her the old copper warming-pan in my study if she would send for it, and hinted that we might have a bed made up for her husband under the head table. Then she would write and say that she did not expect such unkindness from one so young and fair, and that God would punish me for it. And so we worried on.

At last the plan of seats was printed and the printers got the names all wrong. The people with hyphens were put down under "S" instead of "B," as the "Brown-Smiths," etc. The tables were arranged to hold so many people. When I had put the names right and sat up until one in the morning over the plan, all the people who were bringing guests met other friends, invited them, and wrote to me to squeeze in three or four extra chairs. After a few days of that kind of thing, the plan had to be done all over again and people were indignant because they did not get their original seats. Sometimes a couple of guests, spitefully and of *malice prepense*, died, and their host wrote to say they could not come and might he have his money back to buy wreaths. They might just as well have come to the dinner and died afterwards, but some people, even in death, are so thoughtless.

At last, as the eventful night drew near, we started an "overflow" table and remorselessly put all newcomers

there, including the man who had invited a Syrian prince, and was going to bring him "in a costume." Of course I had to tell him that the Committee wanted him not to bring the prince without any costume, but that he had better come in evening dress or people would take him for the man who makes curries. Then the Press* woke up to a knowledge of the dinner and it was only fair that those who work while others eat should have decent seats. We wanted everything to be reported so that members in far-off climes might learn what we were doing.

The Toastmaster (the "swell" of the evening) also had his difficulties. His voice was a rich, deep bass that went down into the bowels of the earth, and he announced the guests as they entered the reception room. On one occasion he came to complain to me that he had never officiated at a dinner where there was a lady in the chair and was he to call her "The Chairwoman"? When that little matter had been adjusted by deciding to call her "Madame in the Chair," he discovered that there was nothing on the programme about "Grace." The Toastmaster said he did not know any "Grace," so I sent him to catch a clergyman and present the Committee's compliments to him and would he oblige. And the clergyman did "oblige," but cut it short because he knew how soon soup gets cold if you indulge in long prayers over it.

We enjoyed our dinner; at least, I did not: the others did. My waiter, a disguised "Bosch," was always "cutting out" my dinner and retiring behind distant entrenchments where he could get at it himself. Just as I was becoming interested in my entrée someone sent me an imploring message, and when I came back nothing but a bomb could have caught my waiter and the entrée. When, however, it came to leaving my ice pudding (I had recaptured it once) I disregarded appearances, and took it with me to the man who had a grievance.

* Swinburne was once unexpectedly called upon to propose "The Press" at a public dinner. He rose hastily, and shrieked out, "The Press is a damnable institution, a horrible institution, a beastly institution," and sat down again.

At the soirée after the dinner, people talked to one another and enjoyed themselves. Gifted friends did things on a platform, and the band made a pleasant background for conversation. Unfortunately, I had forgotten about its need for liquid refreshment, and though "the band played on," it sent me a message to say that its feelings were hurt. Then a very charming woman writer came up to me and declared that I had been saying things about her stories. It turned out that I had meant someone else. She admitted that she had hated me for years, but now something seemed to whisper to her that she had made a mistake, and she wanted to bury the hatchet. So we buried it with great pomp.

There was the usual scurry for the last train, and, after the guests had gone, I stood looking at the desolate scene, only to recall Thackeray's words: "Where's the pleasure of staying when the feast is over, and the flowers withered, and the guests gone? Isn't it better to blow the light out than sit on among the broken meats, and collapsed jellies, and vapid heel-taps?" Though I did not blow out the lights (the Hotel Cecil men turned them off), I generally made my homeward journey in the enforced society of a drunken cabman.

After an interval of a few weeks, we did the same thing all over again.

Although I had not had the felicity of meeting her, I knew that there was a certain Miss Higgs who had recently joined the New Vagabonds. It was her papa who made the first overtures to me, not Miss Higgs (she was too artful for that), and they took the shape of a letter from him:—

Dear Sir,—How much will you accept to make a literatooer of my daughter? She joined your Club last year.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN HIGGS.

It seemed unkind to disappoint Mr. Higgs. He evidently expected me to charge a good deal "to make a literatooer" of Miss Higgs, so I wrote back that I would

take millions. He replied that "my esteemed favour was to hand" and that he would pay ten pounds. When I wrote to him that he was probably throwing away his ten pounds, but I was so impressed by his own epistolary powers that I would willingly see what could be done with his fair daughter for nothing, he replied that if I had not the pluck to charge for my services they were evidently not worth much, and that he would prefer to pay the ten pounds. I rejoined that he was one of those men who constitute the pride of a great country like England and that I should much like to make his acquaintance. He wrote back: "Now you're talking. Come down to 'The Elms' at Ealing and lunch with us and see what you can do."

It was a nice enough house. You know the sort of place where they stick a laburnum in the front garden and call it "The Oaks." On this principle, Mr. Higgs had planted an acacia and called it "The Elms." And Miss Higgs was much prettier than the house. It always seems to me such a pity that a really pretty girl should lose her fresh, healthy colour and get all over ink in her desire to write. Anybody can write. Only the truly great refrain from doing it. If for the modest sum of sixpence or a shilling you can get the cream of others' brains why trouble to write stories yourself?

Mr. Higgs was really a dear, friendly old fellow. After lunch, he went down to "the 'ot 'ouse" to have "forty winks," leaving us in "the lib'ry" to start the short story.

Miss Higgs, though a little nervous, was full of ideas. She said that she had joined the New Vagabonds because most of them seemed so "brainy." One of her ideas, which I did not think at all "brainy," was that we had better begin with a novel. Had she thought of a plot? No, she had not thought of a plot. Wouldn't it be better, I suggested, if for this occasion we confined ourselves to a short story? The writing of a novel between luncheon and dinner time would keep us too busy; even with a phonograph, it would be hard work, and I hadn't a phonograph with me. Though she seemed disappointed, Miss

Higgs reluctantly abandoned the idea of a novel and agreed to begin with a short story.

I gave her a nice little lecture about the different sorts of short stories, indirectly stating my own preference for the French way of doing things; whereupon she blushed and said that she had been taught at school strictly to avoid the French way of doing things. She knew, she added, that there was more artistry in French stories, but—Of course, I knew what she meant by that "but" and hastily changed the subject, though the word "artistry" made me think. Where had the girl picked it up? It did not seem to be in keeping with the atmosphere of "The Elms."

"I suppose we must have a story with love in it?" hazarded Miss Higgs. "That's where I think Kipling fails, don't you? He doesn't seem to find women interesting enough to write about them. The best bit I liked in 'Kim' was where the Hill Woman makes love to him. Do you know Kipling?" She seemed to be so interested in Kipling that I had to tell her something about him. She also wanted to know about Jerome, and I incidentally mentioned that I had been to Oxford Fair with him and had my watch stolen, and that *after* it was stolen he explained to me how it was done. Then I remembered we were not getting on with the story; but she asked whether it was true Jerome was a very serious man, and I explained that all humorists laugh that they may not weep. She seemed much impressed by this statement, and said that she had often felt that way herself. Life was so sad when you came to a place like Ealing and did not know many people. She wanted to go back to New York, where she had "visited" for six months, and "get a move on." At the time her familiarity with these phrases astonished me, but she was no nice that I failed to attach any significance to it.

I hastily returned to the short story. "You think of an incident and plunge right into it, Miss Higgs. If you have a surprise up your sleeve so much the better. Most people who write short stories want to explain things too much;

but what is the good of telling all about the hero's measles and when he first got into a tail coat? I remembered my own first tail coat, and told her I was so proud of it that I walked down Piccadilly with my head turned backward to look at it (the coat, not Piccadilly) and ran into a policeman. She laughed at this, and said that heroes always were so stupid. And what about the heroine? Must there always be a heroine in a short story? Even Balzac took about two pages to describe a girl's eyes, and then there wasn't any story left.

Now where had she heard of Balzac? In New York? I began to mistrust her, but she wanted to know whose short stories I admired most, and I told her how I liked Barry Pain's way of putting things, always giving you something unexpected at the end; and she asked me what Pain was like and had I ever met Phillipps Oppenheim. She had heard that Oppenheim was going in for the ministry with W. L. George for his curate. I explained that this was not so; and she scribbled little notes in a book as I told her anecdotes about writing folk, and asked me where she could find their addresses. It was so pleasant to know where celebrated people lived, so typical.

We got on famously after that, and sketched out a short story. Every now and then Miss Higgs would ask me something about Barrie or Wells or Gilbert Parker and Willie Maxwell and Douglas Sladen, and make little notes of what I told her. She also wanted to know if Silas Hocking had joined the Salvation Army, and I said that it could not be true, because I had seen him the day before and he had told me about a Salvation Army girl who tried to convert an author, and the author asked her if she believed in Jonah and the Whale, and the girl said yes she did. When the author wanted to know why, she could not explain it, but offered to ask Jonah about it when she met him in Heaven. "But suppose Jonah isn't in Heaven?" asked the author. "Then *you* can ask him," replied the girl. Miss Higgs made a note of that, and after I had scornfully refused Mr. Higgs's ten-pound note we parted with expressions of mutual esteem, Miss Higgs

promising to send on the story for my approval after she had carefully written it out.

But she made a disastrous mistake a few days later when she sent me an article, "Chat About British Authors." Enclosed with it was a letter to the editor of an American magazine saying that this article contained special information and she wanted five hundred dollars for it. Miss Higgs had sent her short story to the American editor by mistake instead of to me, and I had received the article intended for him. So I put the article into the fire, and resolved to be more taciturn in future. When a girl talks about "artistry" and shows an intimate knowledge of Balzac, and yet does not know how to tell a short story, one ought to be more careful. But, of course, if you know a lot of authors and hear things about them and tell people in confidence, it is a little aggravating to find them in print a day or two after. There is one author who has worn a respirator for years at the Club, although he never wears it anywhere else. When I asked him why he wore it at the Club, he said there were so many nice, genial fellows there that he could not help telling them all the best stories he had invented lately and they got into the papers, and when he told his own stories at dinner parties people would stare at him and offer to lend him the paper where they had read them. So he had a special respirator made, a respirator with a touch of dog muzzle in it, and heard stories instead of telling his own.

Another woman member of the "New Vagabonds" was what they call in America a "graveyard poetess," because, when not giving dinners, she was always longing to die and be buried, or seeing angels sitting on tombstones, and having joyous visions of broken-hearted authors perishing in garrets; but this did not prevent her from enjoying the dinners she gave to literary folk when she came to stay in England. To one of her dinners she asked a monthly magazine editor named (of course, I have changed all the names) Darcy. His friends called him "Huntley and Palmer" and "Mixed Biscuits," owing to the unfortunate

title of his "organ." But Mrs. Ella D. Otis was not aware of this.

Only one small feminine literary light responded to the invitation to meet Darcy. When he took Miss Englesant in to dinner he had not the smallest idea that she was circulated at Mudie's. As "Huntley and Palmer," his personality would have been familiar to her, but he looked so poetic that she hoped he would live up to his looks and not, like the late lamented Lord Tennyson, inform her that he liked his mutton "cut in chunks."

Darcy ate his dinner in dreamy silence. He was really composing verses about the beautiful girl beside him, and suddenly became conscious that her lovely blue eyes regarded him with a certain seriousness. "Do you know, Mr. Darcy, that you are the only editor here, and that Mrs. Otis expected several more of you?"

He shook his head.

"There's one editor in London whom I hate—the man who edits *The Mixed Biscuit*."

"Don't seem to place it," said Darcy, who had never heard his periodical styled in this irreverent way. "You know, Miss Englesant, there are lots of reasons why Editors can't accept things."

"Oh, I know that. *The Mixed Biscuit* man sent me a printed form with twenty-six reasons why he returned my story. I wrote to ask him which of the twenty-six, and he said——"

Darcy began to remember some recent letters from a girl. "Yes? What did he say?"

"I might take any one of them which pleased me most."

"And now?"

"*I want to marry him!*"

"As a reward?"

"No; to *edit* him and teach him the twenty-seventh reason why he should have accepted my story."

Darcy opened the door as Mrs. Otis collected her flock. He discussed the idea later on with Miss Englesant and dropped into his club afterwards to polish the poem. As he finished his verses, an acquaintance called Twentyman

came staggering in. "Holloh, Old Mixed Biscuits," he said thickly. "Whashyermean turnin' Club into dashed printin' office?"

A light dawned upon Darcy. He himself was "Mixed Biscuits." And Miss Englesant wished to marry him. Good!

A week later he called on her for the third time. "I've made a discovery," he said, admiring the curves of her supple figure.

"Yes?"

"The profane call me 'Mixed Biscuits.' Will you start *editing* me?"

"Ye—es. Where?"

"At St. George's, Hanover Square."

"Ye—es."

"And you love me as much as——"

"Oh, I'll tell you that when I've found out which reason among the twenty-six made you return my story."

"The twenty-seventh," said Darcy.

I was chatting with my friend F. Frankfort Moore, that most lovable, genial, and wittiest of Irishmen, about the old Vagabond days, and he recalled an incident which I had forgotten. "I want," said he, "not to go down to posterity (as the undergraduate said, 'What's posterity done for me?') as an author but as the first guest of the New Vagabonds. Upon that occasion I made a speech, and, knowing the kind of audience I would have, invented all the incidental and illustrative anecdotes which I reeled off. You were standing beside me when Jimmy Greig, the Scotchman and painter critic, came up and congratulated me on my oratory. 'Of course some of the stories were chestnuts,' said he, 'but they were none the worse for that: a guid story will bear repeating, so it will.'

"When he had gone, I asked you if you had heard any of the stories before and you said, 'How could I? I could see that you had invented them for the occasion.'

"But Greig was right about a story being worth repeating, for one of them appeared as the 'caption' to a

drawing in an illustrated paper the next week, and two of the others did the same duty the week after!

“ I was not surprised when a good many years later I saw that Greig was trying to prove that Velasquez was endeavouring to palm off one of his best-known pictures under the monogram signature of a pupil of his own—The Rokeby Venus!

“ I notice that in *The Whitefriars Journal* you were regretting the absence of my name from the lists of publications for 1920. That was because you did not know that the ‘ F. Littlemore ’ of a big illustrated book entitled ‘ A Garden of Peace ’ was the schoolboy equivalent of ‘ F. F. M. ’ I had never written a book of this sort before, so I thought it well to instruct Watt ” (Mr. A. S. Watt is our literary agent and enables us both to live in these hard times) “ to offer it for publication without a hint as to who was the author. He did not think highly of the idea. ‘ It will go the rounds,’ he said despondently. It went the rounds—for just one week; then it was taken by Collins with an advance royalties agreement, and then, but under my own name, by Doran for America. It did amazingly well in the United States. All the past summer I had visitors at Lewes who had been up at the Castle after crossing the Atlantic, making my acquaintance and expressing their indebtedness. One enterprising gentleman begged me to cross to Newport to lay out the gardens of a house he had just built there. But my anonymity in the English edition had its pathetic side, for from Sydney, N.S.W., ‘ F. Littlemore ’ got a letter from one ‘ J. Littlemore,’ affirming that the former must be a relative of his father who had gone from Hampshire to Australia fifty years before.”

It was Frankfort Moore who once said to Sir Hall Caine (we were giving a dinner in honour of the latter) as he pointed to the chairs ranged round the table, “ Even the chairs to-night are all cane.”

The great “ Sarah ” once came to a New Vagabond lunch—three-quarters of an hour late—and had the reception of a lifetime. When she was called on for a speech,

she held out for a long time, then said, "Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you very much." She disappeared scattering autographs on fans and programmes as she went.

On another occasion, Professor Charles G. D. Roberts, celebrated for his wonderful stories of animals, made a witty and humorous speech contrasting the luxury of his present surroundings with life in the woods. He was greatly troubled about the length of his speech. "When I make speeches way back," he said, "if people have had enough of me, they signify the same in their own natural, simple way. They spit on the floor. Will anybody oblige?"

CHAPTER XIII.

REJECTED MANUSCRIPTS

THE other night, when turning out the contents of a drawer, I suddenly found a bundle of old letters labelled "Human Documents." There had not been the slightest necessity to label them at all, but at that time I had a passion for classifying everything except myself. Later on, so many of these documents poured in upon me that, for mere ease of heart and mind, I destroyed them directly they had received attention at my hands. They nearly all related to rejected manuscripts, and may be considered fairly typical. As it is many years ago that I received them, I have no scruple in using them in this way. They may be helpful to others and induce a blind, but generally misguided public, to take a more accurate estimate of an editor's duties. The view of the average literary man (or woman) is that Nero, having gone through various stages of transmigration, finally comes to life again in human shape as an editor and makes poor souls once more dance to his fiddle. The British Public's "great heart," to use the words of a popular author, "palpitates with sympathy at the thought of editorial injustice, viciousness, and tyranny." But I want to have just a few minutes' chat with the "Great Heart," and give it both sides of the question.

The editor of a monthly magazine has so much space at his command every month. Once he has decided upon the amount of space he can spare for fiction, he either makes

arrangements through a literary agent for the stories he requires or trusts to chance contributions. This latter course is unwise, because the British public, in picking up a magazine, instinctively looks for the names of its favourites, and if it does not see them passes on to some other publication. In six months a magazine which trusted wholly to unknown writers would be as extinct as the dodo. Hence, for the sake of self-preservation, an editor must have two-thirds of his magazine filled up with well-known names. These well-known names represent for the most part men and women who have served their apprenticeship to literature through long years of penury and pain. They have given their youth, their health, their all, to make a name and fame in the world, and, having survived this frightful ordeal and won the liking of the public, that public naturally turns to them. They do not know the Chattertons who have perished in their pride, the coming Chattertons whose pride prevents them from perishing; but they do know what their favourites can do, and look for them accordingly. Possibly, the Chattertons in garrets, the Keats's in chemists' shops, may be just as great as the present favourites; but they have not served their apprenticeship; they grumble because fame, recognition, applause, do not greet their first puny efforts; and blame editors and the public when they should concentrate their most strenuous energies on their work, haunt editorial offices, and keep on with dogged perseverance in the thorny paths of Literature. Do not believe for one instant, O neophyte, that Literature is other than a shrew. Sometimes she is a vampire who will suck your blood, wring tears from your weary eyes, and crush the life out of you. If you are a writer, it is because of some divine spark within you. You cannot help it; it is the one thing in the world for you to do; and if that spark is there, you keep on escaping from square holes into which you, a round peg, will not fit, until you achieve success. Believe me or not as you please, the man who writes because he must is the man who either "worries through" or dies in the attempt.

This may sound "tall talk," but it is not so. Many a pitiful tale has reached my ears; many a youngster has invaded my office in threadbare clothes and with gaunt cheeks which told their story of dire distress. Of course, there have been impostors; there have been comic incidents also; but when I look back on my first years of editing, they bring a pang to my heart, a choking in my throat at the thought of the hopeless misery I have been powerless to relieve, the idle sound of sympathy which only aggravated the wound, the anguish and utter woe of many a poor lad who has come to London to starve in a garret or creep back to his native village, crippled in constitution and hopelessly soured by the reception which he has met with from the "Stony-hearted Stepmother." People have even told me as a good joke of Thackeray's resigning the editorship of *The Cornhill Magazine* because of the pain it gave him; but, much as I honoured that great man before I heard this story, I honour him still more when I think of what he must have suffered daily as he went through his letters and MSS.

Take, for instance, the ordinary routine of an editor's life. He comes down to his office at ten in the morning and finds, on the average, fifty letters awaiting him. Most of the MSS. will be cramped and badly written. A few may be typed, and to these he will, naturally, turn first. He has twenty-five manuscripts to look through. How can he do it? Wait a moment. He has made up his mind what his policy is to be for the next six months, he knows how many stories he wants, their length, and what kind of story. At a glance he can see that half of them are too long or too short. That rules out twelve. The first pages of the next six will tell him that they are hopeless. Eighteen gone. The next six are "sexual" or badly written, or copied from someone else. This is a very common practice with dishonest amateurs. My old friend, F. W. Robinson, for instance, was constantly winning prizes in various "snippetty" journals; *i.e.*, he had written the stories. Aspiring but dishonest young authors stole them and sent them in as original contributions. Some-

times the theft was discovered; in many cases it was not. Of course, the real author had his remedy, but then he did not want to be always making himself disagreeable to editors who had been imposed upon. The one remaining story is probably that of a beginner. If the editor is good-natured, he will write to its author, and say, "Your story is too involved," or, "it doesn't grip one in the beginning. If you like to alter it in accordance with my suggestions I will take it." Sometimes, the neophyte gratefully alters it, the story appears, and a start is made by the author. In nine cases out of ten, however, he writes back indignantly and wants to know how the editor dare insult him.

When the MSS. for the day have been disposed of, there is the young lady (with an introduction) who is ambitious, but has not considered it necessary to learn her own language. If the editor does not see her it may mean a quarrel with an old friend. If he does see her, she has probably brought a serial which she wants to run through his magazine for the next two years. When the editor says that he has arranged serials for two years ahead, she hints in rustic terms her unshaken conviction that Ananias and Sapphira did not perish without leaving editorial descendants. In the afternoon a widow lady calls with a pathetic tale about her late husband, who always thought her stories "so very pleasing," and she has one which she wants to make the editor a present of for the modest sum of ten pounds. After that "Captain Montgomery" sends in his name. The editor does not know Captain Montgomery, but may think that he has seen him somewhere, and so the "Captain" gets admission and tells a plausible story about his "having had a bit of a flutter, don't you know, and if you could help a lame dog, &c., &c., &c."

The above are sample callers. Of course, in time, an editor becomes case-hardened, and is inaccessible to any but callers whom he has arranged to see. When he has finished with his callers, the sub-editor enters with a few letters of advice from readers. These generally contra-

dict each other, and come out about even; but they leave a certain amount of wear and tear behind them. Toward six or seven o'clock, a weary and dejected-looking editor creeps into his club. On the step he meets someone coming out, who draws him aside. "Oh, by the way, my dear fellow, don't like to trouble you, but an aunt from whom I've expectations has lately taken to writing, and has sent me up a dashed clever article on Nelson and Lady Hamilton to get published for her. I knew you'd do it, like a shot, so I've told her so. Better send her a cheque for it, and you'll see how the magazine goes up in her part of the world." At eleven o'clock a still more weary and dejected-looking editor creeps home to bed with, to use an Americanism, MSS. "leaking" out of his boots and pockets. Then he wakes up the next morning, and the same weary round begins again.

But to the editorial letters. On second thoughts, I will destroy the most painful and keep the less serious ones for public consumption. Here is the first:

"Enclosed MS. is worth reading. If you consider it worth publication, remit worth. Otherwise, kindly consider it worth returning."

Here is another, with the original wording carefully preserved: "I need not apologise for my presumption in placing this manuscript under your eyes. I do not suppose that you will accept it; but I hope that if you do not, that you will at once drop it among the corpses of the waste-paper basket, to find in that celebrated cemetery perfect rest and sweet oblivion. But, whatever you do, do not let it return to be a 'living plague' in the place of its birth. Some of my relatives abide in the same habitation, and it is possible that there may be something suspicious in the appearance of a rejected manuscript to inflame curiosity, even unto breaking open to search for treasonable evidence. Then should I be 'wounded in the house of my friends.' A rejected manuscript is a bullet which, missing the mark, hits some after object (aimed at an editor's soft heart, strikes his hard head) and, rebounding, smites the marksman, making him in bitter mockery a dead shot. It is

bread cast upon the waters, which returns after many days and chokes us. But whatever may be its form of death, and place of burial, I have one source of consolation. If you read the production, then, although no one else reads it, I shall have had one reader. 'There is one mind common to all men,' says Emerson; therefore being read by you I shall be read universally. P.S.—You will perceive that I am in earnest by the fact that I have sent no stamped envelope."

Here is a sad one:

"I respectfully submit to you the following poem for your judgment. If acceptable, any sum you may pay me for it will be gratefully received, I assure you, as I am very poor. If not available, will you kindly enclose it in the directed envelope and I will call at the business office for it. I have no address here, as I am so poor. I live in whatever lodging-house I can afford."

From any wife about any husband:

"In the temporary absence of my husband I am going to do a very unbusinesslike and, I fear you will perhaps think, a very impertinent thing. I am going to send you his story. I can tell you what he would not, that he is really considered very clever in literature."

This is a letter from a grateful youngster:

"I feel that I have found a valuable friend. For is not frankness a true characteristic of such an one? Your letter contained just what I needed—the plain truth; and I thought it so kind of you to trouble to help me—a stranger. As you may have guessed, I am only a youngster, so there is plenty of time. Patience, work, and a little kindness from the editorial chair—and what then? Someday you may take out this letter and think. . . . Well, do not laugh—it might happen, you know."

Here is a letter from a girl—evidently a very unhappy one:

"I cannot pass on your letter as one would an ordinary 'declined with thanks.' I just want to tell you that your kind advice is not practicable, as '—' is so flagrantly unorthodox that any goody-goody paper wouldn't touch

it with a pair of tongs. It never struck me as a religious story, but just a supernatural romance. The belief it sets out has, nevertheless, saved me from atheism. How could one tolerate a God so paradoxical as a Being who loves and is just and yet eternally punishes a soul for flesh-fettered sins? You see, the story would be refused by any editor who believes in everlasting damnation—for other people.”

Here is a letter from a juvenile James de la Pluche:

“ Me being only a boy in the business of being a footman at the above address (I am a boy and a man at the same time) have written this story in my spare time. It only wants ‘polishing up.’ I have plenty more manuscripts which I do when I’m cleaning knives. Not being used to the trade of humorist, I have not got the sway like yourself, and as you will not live for ever, it would be a shame to let the line die out. So it would be best for you to help on a beginner so as to take your place when you have passed on to that land where there is no waste-paper baskets.”

The jocular contributor:

“ This story was written in a distinctly humorous frame of mind. I deem it well to mention this as from the remarks made on the occasion of the first and only time I read it in the family circle I fancy some misconception may prevail on the subject. It may perhaps occur to you that it would be more convenient if it appeared as a three-volume novel. I can only say that, like the jerry-built villa, it can be altered and decorated to suit the style of the purchaser. Although it seems a shame to deprive the Postal Revenue of what has hitherto been a steady source of income yet, to prevent its absolute loss from wear and tear, no reasonable offer will be refused.”

“ Writ sarkastik ”:

“ I enclose a sample of nonsensical mediocrity. Could make it longer if required, or shorten it. Should you consider it too good and brilliant, kindly return so that I may publicly burn it.”

As an antidote to this list, I append a communication from an office boy. (It afterwards turned out that he had taken a day off at Margate):

“ Pleace the boy name Jimes Smith is not very well he will not be able to come he is very ill he cannot walk pleace send up his 2 weaks pay.”

The editor’s condition is very often similar to that of “ Jimes Smith.” “ He is very ill he cannot walk,” but he cannot get his day off.

CHAPTER XIV.

A FIRST BOOK

HE came into my "den," cast a huge bundle on the floor with unnecessary vehemence, and, with folded arms, darkly surveyed it. "Lie there, poor child of misfortune," he dramatically observed, then sank into my pet arm-chair and began to fill his pipe with my best tobacco, the "Interviewer" brand.

"Did you 'redress yourself to me, my man'?' as the Artful Dodger says. If it's all the same to you, I'd rather it didn't lie there. You'll have the dog biting off the corners. What is it? Manuscript?"

"It is—manuscript! Of course it's manuscript? Did you think it was a traveller's sample?"

"Well, it does seem to have travelled a good deal on its own account. It might have been your week's washing, except that it looks as if it hadn't been to the wash."

"Got a match? Thanks. Lie there" (puff, puff).

"Lie there, thou—thou unkempt, unregarded little one" (puff, puff).

"I say, you haven't brought a dead body——"

"If you will kindly exercise your alleged perceptive faculties (another match?), you will see that the parcel is too small to contain any dead body except that of a cat or a poodle. Note the frayed edges of the brown paper wrappings, the knotted string, the general appearance of its having been out all night for a week."

"Its condition rather reminds me of a story of the late Sir George Reid when he went to visit the painter Israels at the Hague, and asked Israels what he was going to do with a picture which was in a most deplorable condition. 'Oh,' said Israels, 'I shall put it on one side, and pre-

sently some way of remedying its defects will occur to me.' Sir George then asked Israels what he did when he felt depressed, and Israels replied: 'I put on clean linen, get my wife to do likewise, and then we walk in the public places. When the people bow to us, I feel better.' You want to put your book in 'clean linen' and 'walk in public places,' and then you'll feel better."

He snatched it away from me and proceeded to unwrap the contents with as much care as if he were unrolling a surgical bandage. "There!" He frowned still more darkly. "There!"

I took it from him. "Is this your book?"

"Is it my book?"

"Well, isn't it?"

"It was my book—my first-born—pure as a lily—until I sent it out on its travels and it returned to me the soiled, battered, dishonoured, dog's-eared thing you see before you."

"It does look a bit seasick."

"Seasick! And this is sympathy! When I saw those reviews—truthful reviews they were, too—of your last book, did I talk about——"

"Now you're getting nasty besides being incoherent. What in the name of all that's inflammable is the matter with you to-night?"

"I would fain quench my thirst before beginning my tale of woe."

"Quench away. There are the materials on the little table behind you."

He quenched. "How different the world looks to a man when he—when he has quenched," he said, as a dreamy expression stole over his handsome young face.

"And how different he looks to the world!"

"He does—sometimes—if he goes on quenching. You see this pocket-book?"

"I see."

"Postage on novel to various publishers," he read out, "nineteen and fourpence. I always included the return fare."

“That’s wise. Now tell me all about it.”

“You won’t laugh?” His short upper lip trembled a little.

“My dear boy, of course I won’t laugh. Do you think I’m utterly soulless?”

“Sometimes I have my doubts. You know you said it was a jolly good book.”

“So it is. It has all the charm of youth, the freshness, the——”

“That’s what the publishers said. It was too ‘fresh’ altogether.”

“That all?”

“No. Some of them said a good deal more. One man was willing to bring it out for a hundred and twenty pounds, and give me a half-share of the profits after deducting all expenses.”

“I know. They do sometimes say that—some of them.”

“Another wrote that his Reader thought he—He, mind you!”

“Well?”

“She wasn’t a ‘he.’ The MS. smelt of scent, and I found a long, gold hair—lovely hair it was, too—between the pages.”

“I’ve heard some of those Girton girls they’re making such a fuss about have been ‘Reading’ for the publishers.”

“I daresay. They seem to be all over the place. Next time the MS. came back ‘he,’ the Reader, had harpooned it with one of ‘his’ hairpins.”

“Keep it as a family relic. Some day, when you are interviewed, you’ll find it useful. You tell the interviewer all about it, and he will put it thusly: ‘Mr. —— keeps, as a relic of his early struggles, a most interesting hairpin; not a common or garden hairpin, if we may be permitted the vulgarism, but a gold hairpin. It is enshrined in a gold frame, and was the cause of his meeting the Reader of his first accepted book, who is now his wife.’”

“But there wouldn’t be a word of truth in it.”

“You were talking of interviewing. Anything else?”

"Anything else! Lots of 'anything elses.' I put in pages upside down to see whether the book had been read through."

"No wonder it came back to you. That's what beginners do, or gum two pages together. Such things always give the writer away. Why should a Reader—an experienced Reader—go through the whole of it?"

"You sit there and ask me that?"

"Of course. An experienced Reader can tell in the first three paragraphs whether there is anything in the book. I suppose you've been putting blue beads between the pages to see whether they've dropped out or are still in the folds of the paper?"

"I did put in a few."

"You would. Nothing upsets a publisher's Reader so much as to find blue beads in MSS. He always sprinkles in a few more, just to show you he's 'tumbled' to it."

"I thought they weren't the same beads. What's to be done with the thing?" And he launched a savage kick at his unhappy offspring.

I diverted the kick. "Patience! Patience! Patience! You can't expect a publisher to put a lot of money into bringing you out if he hasn't made up his mind you're worth bringing out."

"But you said——"

"I'm not a publisher. He doesn't know what I said. This MS. is in a disgraceful condition. It must be typed."

"I haven't a machine."

"Well, you can take my spare one and learn how to use it. The whole thing is disgracefully blotted and illegible. It's enough to put off any publisher. Stick your name and address in the top left-hand corner of the fair copy, enclose a stamped wrapper for its return if this particular publisher to whom you send it doesn't want the book, and don't write him bothering letters telling him what a genius you are. He'll find that out for himself."

"Thanks, awflee. I'll begin to-morrow." He lingered a moment. "You do think, in spite of the degradation it's gone through, the book has a chance?"

“Of course it has a chance. Now, run away, there’s a good chap. I’m busy. Before you go, you might look at this epitaph on himself written by Benjamin Franklin. It will teach you to be humble”—

“ The body
of
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN,
Printer
(like the cover of an old book,
its contents torn out,
and stripped of its lettering and gilding),
lies here food for worms;
yet the work itself shall not be lost,
for it will (as he believed) appear once more
in a new
and more beautiful edition,
corrected and amended
by
THE AUTHOR.”

He went silently into the darkness, hugging his filthy MS. as tenderly as a young mother hugs her first babe. Now I think of it, that’s what a first book really is. It isn’t a mere book; it’s flesh and blood and brain and youthful agony and hope and fear. All for what? A something for someone to sleep over after a heavy lunch, a something for “ dipping into ” at a railway station, a something to throw away with a grunt when scampered through. A something—.

Well, perhaps a something to gladden a tired heart, to bring a smile to the lips of the weary; a something to embody the dreams and hopes of lovers and show them how much more beautiful their love can make this already beautiful world.

Yet people think there is nothing left to write about. Nothing left to write about! How little they know of the voices which call one, the difficulty of saying beautiful things in a beautiful way to a beautiful world!

CHAPTER XV.

HOW WELL-KNOWN AUTHORS BEGAN TO WRITE

OF course, it is a great moral—sometimes an immoral—responsibility to reveal the secrets of the prison house, and tell how authors' first books began to take shape. Rather shirking this, I have ascertained from various celebrated writers how they set about their work, and propose to give you the results after I have had "first innings." That is one of the pleasures of writing a book of this kind; when you shirk the responsibility yourself, you can make the other people responsible.

Well, now, how do people write novels? Some with a steel pen, some with a quill, some with a typewriter, some with their brains. When the ordinary young writer desires to "perpetrate" a book, he gets out pen and paper and tells his landlady not to bother about what she facetiously calls "her little account," as he has a novel to "knock off." Then, he looks at his beautifully clean new writing-pad and makes the discovery of that oft-quoted person, "The needy Knife-grinder," "Story, God bless you, I have none to tell." But, unlike him, most of the writers mentioned in the following pages, had stories to tell, stories of which the world has approved and continues to approve.

One must start with a heroine, but the difficulty is that the fashion in heroines changes from day to day. One week the limp, clinging, soulful heroine is all the rage; then she takes a week off and is replaced by the girl who goes to Sandow's and lifts weights. As you think this

over, a happy thought occurs to you. Why not make her a combination of the two, and, when the villain is too persistent, it will be easy for her to pick him up with one hand and do dumb-bell exercises with the other?

And nobody loves a half-baked, snivelling villain. Unless he is thorough, people decline to love him as he ought to be loved. If he is a real villain, with a genuine pride in his villainy, readers take him to their great hearts, and when you send him over a precipice write indignant letters about your carelessness in not letting him cling to a bush halfway down. But do not make him too fascinating, or more readers will want to know why he did not marry the heroine. From my own large experience of villains, I know that some of them, rather than do that, would prefer to let go the bush halfway down and "fall headlong into the bottomless abyss." If you want a "thrill," you can always knock the bottom out of the abyss.

By the time you have invented all your characters, you begin to wish that you had not done anything of the sort, but gone "goffing" instead. Still, you perseveringly finish the book, get it out, and receive letters from your readers, letters appreciative or otherwise. "My dear young man," an old lady once wrote to me, "Why do you always make your heroine wear 'dove-coloured draperies'?" I can assure you that it really isn't done nowadays. Even heroines can't afford anything so expensive. Get a woman friend to dress your heroine up to date with something to go with her complexion. When you reach my age, you'll know that very, very few complexions can stand dove-coloured draperies."

Before going on with what others have to say about writing books, I should like to give you the plot of an unpublished novel. The late Stephen Crane, author of that well-known book "The Red Badge of Courage," once called on me at Pearsons. "As Pearsons won't advance anything on this before it's written," he said, "if I don't come back from abroad you can have this plot of

a novel and do what you like with it." As I cannot work on other men's plots, all or any of my readers are welcome to make what use they like of it, providing they first settle the question of copyright.

PLOT OF UNPUBLISHED NOVEL BY STEPHEN CRANE

A young officer in the Guards resigns and disappears because of some financial scandal which has attached to his name. He goes to America, with a little money, and, with an American companion, begins life anew on a ranch in the West. In England he is forgotten apparently by all save a girl of noble family, an engagement with whom he had broken off at the appearance of the scandal. He dies on his ranch in America, even as his name is being publicly cleared in England. The girl, knowing his whereabouts, impetuously starts with her father for America to re-establish the old relations. They meet the partner of the dead Guardsman, and he falls in love with the girl before he discovers their identity and mission. Upon nearing the ranch, they tell him of the reason for their journey. In the crisis of emotion, he is led to lie and preserve the companionship of the girl by pretending that the Guardsman is still alive. They go to the ranch and wait the coming of the dead Guardsman, whom they suppose to be away on a short journey to one of the cattle camps. The partner lies and lies. He engages in a terrible conflict with the memory of the dead man—in his own mind and in the girl's mind.

The life of these three people—the partner, the girl, and the father—goes on in the invisible presence of the dead man. He is the central personage of the story, and influences every thought and every action of the living.

The lover thinks of him as a successful rival, this man who had obtained the love of the girl by means which are to him mysterious, and which he would give anything to know; the girl, of course, thinks of him and waits for him, anxious, impatient, and also wondering a little uneasily whether the lapse of time and that new life have changed

him; and the father is paternally anxious to know whether he is still morally eligible, and so on. The waiting for him strings them all to a high pitch. The partner is driven from lie to lie, is disgusted with himself, but cannot stop now, since he feels that he is making an impression on the girl, and if the truth came out the father would take her away at once. As his chance of success with the girl increases it becomes more difficult for him to own the truth. By this feeling he is driven to the absurdity of arranging an elopement from the dead man. He has defeated the shade, but the girl cannot face the man with whom she has apparently broken faith.

The strain of the ironical situation is almost too much for the partner; and here I want to produce the effect of a man almost driven to despair by the tragic absurdity of his fate, whose weirdness overpowers him with a sense of absolute reality. He feels he must flee also from the memory.

They take horse. After galloping for some miles over the prairie, they see a cloud of dust behind them. It is only the rising wind, but the girl cries out that her old lover is pursuing them. Then the man who dared not confess his deception breaks down at last. The *denouement* of the story, worked out psychologically, takes place in the night and the silence of the plains. They have dismounted and are alone, with earth and heaven, their horses cropping the grass while he confesses and has to conquer her again.

Now we will go back to our writers:—

DR. W. L. COURTNEY

“ I do not find it at all easy to describe how I first began to write. Does anyone know when they began something which has become a familiar accompaniment of their career? Ask a musician how he began to write music, ask a painter how he began to paint—it is the same problem. For a great deal of such work seems to be instinctive, not dependent upon the conscious exercise of

will, but spontaneous. Perhaps a real poet might be aware of when the divine afflatus seized him, but an ordinary writer, however varied may be his output, can only recall with the utmost difficulty what were the first beginnings.

"I knew that, as a schoolboy, at all events, I used to scribble—mainly poetry, of course, for that inevitably happens to any young boy or girl. But also I tried to write romances of a melodramatic type, with the usual hero doing impossible deeds of daring, and the beautiful elusive heroine never really captured until the last page. In the School Magazine I naturally found some scope, more, however, for poetry and romance than for essays. To write essays always demands something more than one can expect from a boy, and if a boy tries to write criticisms, you will find that as a rule he is exceedingly severe and exceedingly dogmatic. I don't think youngsters ought to be encouraged to write criticisms of books or of plays. They commit themselves to very foolish statements, and they have no notion how much in this world can be accomplished by a judicious compromise—which respects the intentions of the author criticised while yet mentioning the points in which he has failed. Fortunately, if you leave a boy alone with a pencil in his hand, he will write anything rather than an essay or an article. He will, like most of us at that period, be a sedulous imitator of Tennyson, and also reveal sincere depths of pessimism and a general despair as to the proper constitution of this globe.

"A good deal of what I have said remains true of an undergraduate's career. Thanks to a classical education, a young man's taste is generally right. He can detect good writing from bad. He knows the difference between the carefully-modulated style and the raucous efforts of rant. Moreover, the undergraduate is far more chary of committing himself to paper than the schoolboy. He has learnt a little more, and therefore he is capable of a certain reticence and modesty. And now, perhaps, after a sedulous attendance on lecturers and professors, he will try and

write an essay or article on the most general subjects, or else a particular appreciation of some author who is an especial favourite. He likes to argue a matter like style, from the point of view of the classical models to which he has become accustomed in his school days. The happy-go-lucky style of a writer who comes from Fleet Street he will have nothing to do with. Moreover, he does not feel quite at home with the gasping staccato utterances of some latter-day novelists. Perhaps he has become interested in the Union Debating Society, and when he delivers an oration it shall be after the model of Cicero or Demosthenes. All the time he is probably writing furtive things which never see the light—little studies of this or that, whatever has happened to interest his fancy. In extreme cases he has been known to keep a diary and record therein daily impressions. But this last is a dangerous exercise, for it is in writing diaries that even the best of our fellow-creatures become prigs.

“ Well, this is the sort of dream-like remembrance that comes back to me from those early years in which there was always an abundance of matter and a persistent hope that after many days some of this mass of production might see the light. Then a fortunate accident happens by which a piece of work is accepted by one of the leading reviews, and if that has gone well and received some laudatory notice, the ambition rises higher—to write a book of some kind, something that will be worth putting between covers, and present, it may be, new points of view for a jaded world. So, as the years go by, the vision grows wider. Then versatility—which is by no means the best gift of the gods—tempts a man to write all kinds of things—a drama, or a novel, being the main predilection. Those were happy days when the capacity for work seemed endless and the long expanse of years had not tarnished the first ardour of composition. Alas! there comes a time when facility goes and reticence takes its place, making the individual no doubt a more companionable creature, but also obscuring the range and value of his vision. It

is easy enough to write when one is in the mood for it, but when one is not, and when the work has to be done, that means a foretaste of Gehenna."

SIR ANTHONY HOPE HAWKINS

"But you're only asking me about the oldest, old story. The Bar—no work; and no money. But abundance of leisure (ten to six in the Temple). Then, sending in short stories and oddments to the papers. Sidney Lowe, of the *St. James's*, first gave me hospitality. Then a little later I began a book with 'A Man of Mark.' So, two or three not very successful years. And a little law came along too, and pretty busy 'devilling.' Then 'Zenda' and 'Dolly,' and a choice between two mistresses had to be made. And here I am, after a long liaison with Miss Literature, still not sure that I hadn't better have stuck to Mrs. Law."

MR. HENRY ARTHUR JONES

"I suppose I took to it as naturally as a duck takes to water. From the time of about the age of thirteen, I began to pester Editors with poems, essays, short stories, and general comments upon the universe.

"When I was twenty-four I gave all my leisure during three years to writing a three-volume novel. I took it to Kegan Patl, who gave it to his Reader. It was returned to me with the following verdict:—

"'This cannot be called a first-rate novel; it cannot even be classed as a good second-rate novel; but it is a fairly passable third-rate novel.'

"After that, I took to play-writing.

"I am sending you herewith a copy of 'My Dear Wells,' and I hope you will get a tenth part of the pleasure in reading it that I had in writing it."

I followed the "fight" between "My Dear Wells" and Mr. Henry Arthur Jones with great pleasure as the various letters appeared in *The Evening Standard*, and I am going to re-read the letters with still greater pleasure, for it was a ding-dong, hammer-and-tongs contest. The nature of it may be judged from the paper cover to "My Dear Wells."

Here it is:—

MY DEAR WELLS

A Manual For The Haters of England

By HENRY ARTHUR JONES

“ Mr. Wells is one of the most popular and influential of the ‘thinkers’ and writers who ‘think’ and write against England. It has been Mr. Henry Arthur Jones’s chief endeavour in this volume to test the quality of Mr. Wells’s ‘thinking,’ its fibre and cogency, to demand his credentials that they may be *viséd* by the final court of appeal.”

MR. H. G. WELLS’S opinions on the letters addressed to him in this volume.

From the *New York Times*:

“ His campaign is a great nuisance to me.”

“ One might as soon expect reason from three penny-worth of catsmeat as from a mind of this sort.”

It is vigorous invective on the part of Mr. Jones—very vigorous. How on earth he has escaped a dozen libel actions I cannot imagine; but, in a desire to show him as a profound admirer of the greatness of Shakespeare, I cannot refrain from quoting one passage, or part of it (I dare not give the whole), addressed to another dramatist, who shall be nameless:—

“ You, who have exalted Shakespeare by defaming him, and glorified him by your contempt; you, who have marked your own level, and advertised your impotence to understand anything that is worthy of men’s respect and honour and praise, by proclaiming: ‘with the single exception of Homer there is no eminent writer, not even Sir Walter Scott, whom I can despise so utterly as I despise Shakespeare when I measure my mind against his. The intensity of my impatience with him occasionally reaches such a pitch that it would positively be a relief to me to dig him up and throw stones at him.’

“ You would dig Shakespeare up and desecrate his dead remains, whose living words for ever call upon England to know the greatness of her strength and to stamp her

traitors under her foot; you would do this, you who delight to desecrate everything that, dead or living, commands the reverence of mankind? ”

Then Mr. Jones suggests that the author of the passage he quotes should be “ dug out ” and thrown over Shakespeare’s Cliff on Shakespeare’s next birthday. “ My dear Wells’s ” “ three pennyworth of catsmeat ” isn’t in it with this impassioned denunciation. Is there no way of getting the immortal bard himself to “ chip in ” ?

All-knowing Wells, also indignant Jones,
Unite to keep that playwright from my bones,
And when he falls a victim to Death’s maw,
I’ll settle him. Throw stones at ME! Pshaw!

THE RIGHT HON. GILBERT PARKER, BART., ETC., ETC.

“ How did I first begin to write? I wrote always in a kind of way, and I began by writing verse; then my first literary success was three plays for George Rignold in Australia. After that, ‘ Pierre and His People,’ in 1892, was my first piece of work in fiction. It proved a success, it still sells, and I had really none of the hardships of literary life, for since 1884 I’ve been more or less successful.”

MR. GILBERT KEITH CHESTERTON

“ My first efforts certainly appeared in a magazine run by myself and R. E. Vernede and E. C. Bentley, of St. Paul’s School, called the *J. D. C.* Later on, I went into Fisher Unwin’s office and there wrote reports on manuscripts, etc., but found my first chance of journalism in the pages of *The Speaker* during the days of the Boer War. I also did a lot of reviewing about that time for *The Bookman*, and then worked on *The Daily News* under the editorship of Mr. Rudolph Lehmann. My Saturday *Daily News* articles became popular, and from thenceforward my success as a journalist was assured.”

Who does not know Mr. Chesterton’s personality? He is at his best when delivering epigrams at “ The Women Writers ” or kindred clubs, and overflowing from the capacious chair usually placed at his disposal. Mr. Ches-

terton, of late years, has become much thinner. At one time his friends used sorrowfully to declare that he could play "Dr. Johnson," in the Pageant, "without any stuffing."

MR. STANLEY J. WEYMAN

"The first two short stories of any value that I had published were accepted by Comyns Carr and James Payn in 1883 in, I fancy, the same month, and appeared the one in the first number of *The Cornhill New Series*, the other in the third number of *The English Illustrated Magazine*.

"The first novel I wrote (at James Payn's instigation) was a complete failure. Then four years later I cut it down by nearly a half, and it was published as 'The New Rector.'

"The first I had published was 'The House of the Wolf,' accepted by Comyns Carr for *The English Illustrated*, but declined by Macmillan as a book on the advice, I believe, of Morley. Longmans bought and published the book with good results, I should say, for themselves—which I don't grudge them. Comyns Carr sympathised with me very kindly.

"The first book that *took* with the public was 'A Gentleman of France,' taken by Longmans for *Longman's Magazine*, on sight of the first three numbers. I don't know on whose judgment. A very handsome review in *The Times* made its fortune.

"I owe an enormous debt to James Payn and Comyns Carr for their generous advice and encouragement. Seton Merriman and I had the pleasure of sending Payn a joint present—I think it was a silver inkstand—on one of his last birthdays. I can see his eyes still twinkling at me from behind his spectacles. Of little value in itself, I hope the gift gave him a momentary pleasure.

"All dead, far-away things now. 'Don't you write?' an acquaintance said to me lately. 'I am sure my father told me you did.'

"But I had a hundred times more than my deserts, and

How Well-known Authors Began to Write 179

I am thankful I lived when books were sold at 4s. 6d. and people could afford to buy them."

MR. W. L. GEORGE

"The writing of my first novel was not premeditated. I mean, I did not, as Mr. Hueffer puts it, 'twine vine leaves into my hair and write.' What happened was that until then I had written only works on economics and sociology, and then I came across a character which interested me enormously, about whose life I speculated, until at last I grew so interested that the only thing to do was to write of this life to put the fire out. Whether that is the way in which a novel should come to birth I leave others to decide. Perhaps the skilled craftsman, who knows exactly what he wants to do in literature and does it every morning from ten till one, has the best of it; perhaps it is better that a novel should originate like a stomach ache, we know not whence, and the public may add—we know not why!"

MR. BARRY PAIN

"My first printed and published work occurred when I was nine years old. But I used to make up yarns and tell them verbally long before then. It appeared in the 'Christmas Annual' of the school I then attended. It was a poem entitled *Evening*. It breathed a spirit of fervent piety, and I wish I had a copy of it to send you, for I think it would do you good. Afterwards, when I went to Sedbergh, I was a regular contributor of alleged poetry to the school magazine. This would probably have been rather serious for me but for the fact that I was also in the football fifteen.

"At Cambridge I did a good deal of University journalism, and helped to start a new paper there. This was started with a capital of £5 fully paid up. Somewhere about the third number a justly infuriated printer forced the editors to collect such watches, studs, and scarfpins as they possessed, and to obtain a loan on them from the local pawnbroker, for his satisfaction. After that we changed to a London printer.

“ On one occasion the A.D.C. gave a performance on the night before the paper came out. I went to that performance, travelled up to London afterwards, writing my criticism in the train, took it to the printers, and was back in Cambridge, bringing the entire edition with me, by seven o'clock next morning. I am sorry to add that I obtained my railway fare by purchasing a copy of Jowett's 'Thucydides' where I had credit, and selling it for cash to a bookseller in another street. This is, I believe, illegal, and might have landed me in a felon's cell.

“ In 1889 I had my first article in a London periodical. It was called, 'The Hundred Gates,' and appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine*. This brought me offers of work from several editors, including Burnand, who got me for a time to write for *Punch*, and W. E. Henley, whose letter urging me to devote myself solely to serious work I still keep. I came to London and took up writing as a profession on January 1st, 1890.”

MR. EDEN PHILLPOTTS

“ Here is a little recollection of my early days. My dear old friend Coulson Kernahan took me in my green youth on a Sunday evening to the reception of an American poet who loved to collect youthful authors about her. From this lady we received encouragement, and I remember how everybody told everybody else that their work was magnificent and they promised to attain the topmost bough of the Tree of Fame. Most of us had written one little book in covers, but our hostess enjoyed a wider measure of renown.

“ I stood impressed among these brilliant people, and there came to me a tall, thin American, who, like myself, was listening. 'And have you done anything supreme?' he asked me as I looked him up and down doubtfully. 'Not yet,' I replied. 'Thank God! Shake! More have I,' he said.”

MR. LEONARD MERRICK

“ The first money I ever received from a paper came from *Tit-Bits*—sixteen and fourpence for a paragraph

called 'Where Do Women Eat?' I estimated that *Tit-Bits* would be worth about £40 a year to me after that. But they never took anything else. I began to feel myself really and truly a 'literary man' when I contributed a 3,000 word story to another paper for 7s. 6d. It was a proud day for me when the editor spontaneously raised me to ten 'bob' for other stories."

MR. ARTHUR REED ROPES (ADRIAN ROSS)

"I daresay I should have drifted into light musical pieces in any case; I wrote a good deal of verse, serious and light, from a fairly early age, and published a small volume of 'Poems,' at my own expense, as a way of celebrating my fellowship at my college. My main work, however, was history, and I tried for (and nearly got) two professorships at the newer universities. But I had a love for Gilbert and Sullivan, and still dabbled in libretti. Possibly nothing would have come of this if I had not been to the University boat race, where I caught cold in a weak tooth, went to stay with my family in Normandy, and, while I was laid up with a swelled face, started on a libretto and completed it afterwards. At Cambridge I met Dr. Osmond Carr, who was looking out for a librettist. We collaborated in a piece. This was tried on the public at some matinées, and the public was not impressed, so we re-wrote the piece, and it was brought to the notice of George Edwardes, who gave us an order for a burlesque on Joan of Arc. The subject was merely a peg on which to hang music and dances; my historical knowledge was exercised in avoiding the facts of the Maid's story, and in finding for Arthur Roberts a character of his own name—Arthur de Riche-mont, Constable of France and Duke of Brittany, and comrade in arms of Joan. Alma Stanley, the gifted lady who had the doubtful pleasure of twice reading her own obituary notices, was Lord Shrewsbury Talbot, and hence appropriately called 'The Hansom Earl.'

"Owing to my inexperience of the stage, there was a certain freshness in the piece; but it was nearly wrecked at the start by a strike scene. My collaborator (Mr. John

L. Shine) and I, meeting in the summer, when the industrial horizon was clear of clouds, had saved Joan by a general strike of all concerned, except the executioner, who refused to strike. The piece was produced in the winter, with a number of serious strikes going on, and Mr. George Edwardes and the rest of us had the unfortunate idea of making our strike scene topical, with the result of a Labour Demonstration fuss in the Gallery. Arthur Roberts saved the situation with a song of the kind that is apparently going to be 'suggestive,' and turns out to be strictly proper. The strike was cut out, and Joan of Arc ran for a year altogether at three consecutive theatres, which was not so common then as it is now.

"Since then I have been doing more or less light musical pieces, etc.; but I shall never forget the rehearsals at the old Opera Comique, in the depth of winter, with the dressing-rooms hardly habitable from redecoration, and old Richard Barber, a terror to slackers, but kind to those who tried, organising an elaborate production on a small and hardly accessible stage. Once when he was arranging a chorus entrance, he found the music insufficient in length, and called on the Composer for 'three more bars.' He was told that he must have four, which the Composer proceeded to improvise at the piano as an extension of the original passage. In the middle of the third bar, Barber called on him to stop. 'I thought you wanted *four* bars,' said Dr. Carr. 'So I did, but I don't want such d—d *long* bars,' answered the producer."

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

"I used to edit a school magazine of a Bolshevist tendency in both schools I attended, so, I suppose, the roots of evil were always in me. I also wrote the prize poem at school, so my tendency *could* take more laudable shapes. I was always scribbling yarns—very crude and worthless. The first money I ever earned was a pound for translating an article about gas meters from the German for some Scotch technical paper. Then I got three guineas for a little story in *Chambers' Journal*, 'The Sassassa Valley.'

That was in 1879, I think, and I would be twenty years of age. There was a hiatus then, but I wrote a lot which, happily, never appeared. Then I had four or five short stories, also very crude, in *London Society*, which was edited by a Mr. Hogg.* He claimed the whole copyright, and brought out a book of these later, much to my horror; but it has, I hope, died from its own internal defects. I also got into *Temple Bar*, *All the Year Round*, and finally, *Cornhill*, but during eight or nine years of work I never, at my best, made £50 in any year. Then I wrote my 'prentice novel, 'The Firm of Girdlestone,' very melodramatic, but no one would touch it. Then 'Micah Clarke,' accepted by Andrew Lang after much turning down. Then two short books on Sherlock Holmes, which made no mark at all at the time. Finally, 'The White Company,' which really cleared the road for me. I was thirty when I wrote it. After that came the Sherlock Holmes stories."

"TOBY, M.P." (SIR HENRY LUCY)

I was turning over some old note books the other day (at that time I had a passion for taking verbatim notes) and came across some jottings about a literary dinner at which Sir W. H. Lucy ("Toby, M.P.," of *Punch*) was the guest of the evening, with Sir Anthony Hope Hawkins in the chair. As "Toby, M.P.," has an article forthcoming on how he began to write, I will give his speech instead, a speech in which he chaffed the secretary about Bernard Partridge's sketch on the Club paper of a provokingly pretty "Vagabond."

"Of course," he said, "I thought she was the New Vagabond, and recognised a vast improvement on some old ones I have known. I dressed myself with particular care in anticipation of meeting her, peradventure being taken in to dinner by her. My mistake illustrates one of the difficulties of the policy of the open door" (the girl in

* I remember Hogg, who was a great personage at one time but fell on evil days, and, shabby and dilapidated, came to see me twice a week at *The Idler* with an equally shabby old portfolio, from which he extracted ancient and evil-smelling MSS. which he wanted to sell.—G. B. B.

the sketch enters through an open door) “ of which we have heard so much. There is, however, one compensation I find in the presence in the chair of the distinguished biographer of ‘ Rupert of Hentzau.’ It seems only the other day I used to look out in a certain evening paper for ‘ The Dolly Dialogues,’ delighting in their subtle humour, their exquisite phrasing. And now, behold, Anthony Hope’s name is known to the ends of the earth, and, like the late Mr. Squeers, though in a much more agreeable form, he has founded a school.

“ I must admit that I am more at home in the House of Commons, whence I have just come, and whither I must return. The House of Commons is, or rather used to be, called the best club in England, but it is weak in the matter of dinners. I suppose that, for a respectable and by no means cheap club, the House of Commons dinner is the worst in London. Then there is the drink difficulty. For men with a conscience—and some sit in the House of Commons—it is a disturbing reflection that, taking with their meals whatsoever modest amount of liquorish refreshment, they are breaking the law. The House of Commons is not licensed to sell drink, either to be consumed on the premises or to be taken away in your own jugs. Yet, as the reports of the Kitchen Committee show, there is a great deal consumed in the course of a session. It was an abiding trouble to Sir Wilfrid Lawson, who was always plotting to have the Kitchen Committee brought up at the Westminster Police Court and fined for selling drink on unlicensed premises. An ancient warrior, General Goldsworthy, was induced to succeed Lord Stanley at the post of danger, and was admirably fitted for it, being by nature murderously matter of fact. One night Sir Wilfrid told him a story delightful in its Attic simplicity.

“ Two men were gossiping in a village alehouse, and one mentioned the death of a respectable farmer in a neighbouring parish. ‘ Did he die of drink?’ his crony asked. ‘ Well,’ said the other, ‘ I never heard anything to the contrary.’ ‘ And did he die of drink?’ asked General Goldsworthy.”

“Toby, M.P.,” reluctantly admitted that the House of Commons is not what it was. “One sad, personal experience illustrates the situation from a particular point of view. Many years ago I made a practice of never taking a subject or a scene presenting itself before twelve o’clock. I was quite certain, within an hour, to find flashed forth from the Irish quarter some delightful episode. One such night in the olden time a quiet-looking member named Blake rose from the Irish camp and, in the most matter-of-fact manner, as if he were reading an invoice, told a story that over the waste of years lingers in my memory. The matter under debate was the Sunday Closing Bill. The story does not bear one way or the other on the argument of that vexed question. But, then, the speaker was an Irishman. Mr. Blake, he confidently informed the House, had an uncle who regularly took six tumblers of whisky-toddy daily. This troubled Mr. Blake, and, after much consideration, he resolved to write and remonstrate with his relative. The following was the letter:—

“ ‘ My dear Uncle,

“ ‘ I write to say how pleased I should be if you could see your way to giving up your six glasses of whisky a day. I am sure you would find many advantages in doing so, the greatest of which would be that, as I am persuaded, it would be the means of lengthening your days.’

“ The Uncle replied:—

“ ‘ My dear Nephew,

“ ‘ I am much obliged to you for your dutiful letter. I was so much struck by what you said, and, in particular, by your kind wish to lengthen my days, that last Friday I gave up the whisky. I believe you are right, my boy, as to my days being lengthened, for, bedad, it was the longest day I ever remember.’ ”

MR. W. J. LOCKE

“ I don’t know when or how I began to write. I seem to have been writing all my remembered life. An aged

relative still possesses and shows—to the occasional contemptuous merriment of my family—some ten-year-old verses. I know I wrote a five-act tragedy on Cyrus when I was fifteen, and a novel at sixteen, which are now in the happy limbo of vanished things.

“ My first short story appeared in *London Society*, a monthly, in 1882 or 1883. Wilkie Collins’ novel was running through it. I think I’m one of the few living writers who can boast of appearing in the same magazine as Wilkie Collins. In fact, I may say that from earliest childhood it was my ambition to be a writing creature, and if my first novel wasn’t published till ’94 (‘ At the Gate of Samaria ’), it wasn’t because the *idée fixe* had ceased to haunt me. My contract (with Heinemann) for this was for the three volume form; but between contract and publication Hall Caine had revolutionised the Trade with his 6s. ‘ Manxman.’ So my contract was changed, and I became one of the 6s. movement pioneers.

“ What more can I say? If I’ve succeeded, it was due, in the first case, to a certain demure and conceited obstinacy which, I think, I hid beneath the mask of a mild and modest exterior.”

SIR H. RIDER HAGGARD

“ I began to write as a lad in Africa, and the first thing was an account of a Zulu war-dance, which appeared, I think, in *The Gentleman’s Magazine* in 1876.

“ The first book I wrote was a political history called, ‘ Cetywayo and His White Neighbours,’ published in or about 1882, by Messrs. Trübner. This book has become one of the sources of historical information for that period of African history, and a good many of its predictions have been verified by the course of events.

“ On page 284 I find a very curious parallel in which I show, as a fanciful proposition, that the same arguments which led to the abandonment of the Transvaal after Majuba, might be urged with equal force to support the abandonment of Ireland and its loyalists.

“ In those days I did not dream that I should live to set

the latter employed. The thing is so curious, that I enclose an extract which may interest you:—

“(New Edition, 1900, p. 283, Chap. VI., ‘Cetywayo and His White Neighbours.’)

“ ‘As regards the smaller and more immediate issue of the retrocession, namely, its effect on the Transvaal itself, it cannot be other than evil. The act is, I believe, quite without precedent in our history, and it is difficult to see, looking at it from those high grounds of national morality assumed by the Government, what greater arguments can be advanced in its favour, than could be found to support the abandonment of—let us say—Ireland. Indeed, a certain parallel undoubtedly exists between the circumstances of the two countries. Ireland was, like the Transvaal, annexed, though a long time ago, and has continually agitated for its freedom. The Irish hate us—so did the Boers. In Ireland Englishmen are being shot, and England is running the awful risk of blood-guiltiness, as it did in the Transvaal. In Ireland smouldering revolution is being fanned into flame by Mr. Gladstone’s speeches and acts, as it was in the Transvaal. In Ireland, as in the Transvaal, there exists a strong loyal class that receives insults instead of support from the Government, and whose property, as was the case there, is taken from them without compensation, to be flung as a sop to stop the mouths of the Queen’s enemies. And so I might go on, finding many such similarities of circumstances, but my parallel, like most parallels, must break down at last. Thus—it mattered little to England whether or not she let the Transvaal go, but to let Ireland go would be more than even Mr. Gladstone dare attempt.

“ ‘Somehow, if you follow these things far enough, you can always come to vulgar first principles. The difference between the case of the Transvaal and that of Ireland is a difference not of justice of cause, for both causes are equally unjust or just according as they are viewed, but of mere expediency. Judging from the elevated standpoint of the national morality theory, however, which, as we know, soars above such truisms as the foolish statement that force is a remedy, or that if you wish to retain your prestige,

you must not allow defeats to pass unavenged, I cannot see why, if it was righteous to abandon the Transvaal, it would not be equally righteous to abandon Ireland! ’ ’ ”

MR. HAROLD BINDLOSS

“ The thing began in the Golden Days, when, aged twenty, some of us spent our leisure building and racing small sailing boats. The Committee of the impecunious Sailing Club thought we ought to advertise our doings to attract members. Somebody must try to get an account of a hard-sailed match in the newspapers. I tried, and when the editor asked for half-a-column of the same whenever we had a race, nobody, except my friends, was more surprised than myself. Then somebody said, ‘ Try *The Field*,’ and *The Field* was kind. All the same, no cheques arrived, and in the Golden Days one had more use for plane and tiller than the pen.

“ I let it go and pondered the thing again at a prairie homestead in the old N.W.T. after a hailstorm wiped out the crop. Still, one had to earn ten per cent. interest on the resulting debt, and there was not much time for literary experiments. Gophers, drowning in the well and flavouring the food, dissolved the agricultural partnership, after a splendid row, when one maintained more gophers came into our neighbourhood than in all the rest of Canada.

“ I went to sea, and the happy thought rested until I returned, shaken by fever, from the Niger coast. Trade was bad, I was sick, and the skipper was persuaded he didn’t want me back. Spain, Morocco, and the Canaries had enlarged my experiences, but not my purse, and (not knowing what else to try) I tried the magazines and weekly newspapers. Some were cold, but some were very kind, and a number of years of desperate effort and stern economy gave me a push off. All the same, one sometimes feels that driving oxen or running a cargo launch through the surf is, in many ways, a softer job than literature.”

MR. CLIVE HOLLAND

“ I first became known in the writing world as the author of ‘ My Japanese Wife,’ and ever after its appear-

ance have found great difficulty in persuading people that my wife is not a Japanese. In common with the writer of this book, I have also had the doubtful pleasure of reading my own obituary notices.

“ I have one fascinating hobby—photography—and have found it invaluable for literary purposes, although it has led me into several scrapes. I was once arrested on the Continent as a spy, and on the way to the Guard House secured evidence of my innocence by offering to show the mechanism of my camera to my captor, thereby fogging the plate it contained, and removing all traces of anything *verboten*.

“ The last portrait of Mr. Gladstone was taken by me as he was leaving Bournemouth to go home to die. Mr. Gladstone had promised me a sitting, but the doctors suddenly decided to send him home. He sent me a note saying that if I would come to the Station a snap-shot might possibly be taken. It was, for Mr. Gladstone caught sight of me at the Station and paused and smiled. I was ready, the camera shutter opened and closed, and what was destined to be the last photograph ever taken of the living Gladstone was completed.

“ The ‘ Divine Sarah ’ consented to allow me to photograph her, and I was shown into her *atelier*, a combined reception-room and studio. A young lady was also waiting. When the great tragedienne came in she posed statuesquely against a short Corinthian marble pillar, on which was a bust of her son Maurice. I retired beneath the focussing cloth. She asked how she should pose. I replied that there was no one who could instruct her in such a thing. She smiled, and I went under the black cloth. A moment later a perfect torrent of words flowed from someone. The young lady was reciting *Hamlet*. Once more I retired. ‘ Hurry, Monsieur,’ exclaimed Madame. ‘ I wish to drive into Paris.’ I wanted to get a good portrait of her and said unthinkingly: ‘ Is it that by hurrying Madame desires to risk a poor result?’ She looked as if she were about to flash lightning, then smiled. ‘ You are right, Monsieur. The good things are not easily

190 More Memoirs—and Some Travels

or quickly attained in this world. I will await your convenience.'

"Once a wealthy tea-planter in Ceylon wrote to me for the name and address of a pretty model. 'I want to marry that girl,' he frankly wrote, 'for I'm able to keep a wife in slap-up style.' Unfortunately, the young lady was already married."

MISS GERTRUDE PAGE

"Wrote my first story in Christmas magazine for home amusement, when about nine years old. When I read it now, I wonder how I could possibly have known so many long words. I favoured three syllables at the least.

"Next took to writing short stories with French exercise book propped up in front of me during 'evening prep.' My governess used to enjoy reading them. At seventeen wrote a long story full of little morals! At nineteen wrote another long story, afterwards serialised in *The Girl's Own Paper*.

"After that, in seven years, wrote six novels, and could not get one of them accepted anywhere. 'Paddy, the Next Best Thing,' under another name, was one of them; and 'The Great Splendour,' also under a different name, was another.

"'Love in the Wilderness,' the first novel accepted. Messrs. Hurst and Blackett then remembered they had had others of mine, and asked for them.

"'The Edge o' Beyond,' second novel, assured my future success. This was paid for in bitter disappointments over the six which came back to me again and again.

"Always believed in my star as an authoress. Very shy of my work, and wrote in secret. Often in the night, wrapped up in shawls, etc., until stiff and cold.

"Told no one of my success in *The Girl's Own Paper* until I had the cheque to show. One of a large, unsympathetic family. Always prefer to write in the open air."

MR. HUGH WALPOLE

"I never had any *struggles!* Three weeks after coming to London in 1909 I got reviewing on the morning *Stan-*

dard, which kept me for four years, and since the publication of 'Fortitude,' I've lived entirely by novel-writing. Prosaic, I fear. As for when I first wrote, I began a story at the age of six, and have been writing without a pause ever since."

MISS SHEILA KAYE-SMITH

"I have written ever since I was a child, but have nothing nice to show for it in the Daisy Ashford way, as I very seldom wrote anything down, or, if I did, never finished it. I used to recite my stories aloud, walking up and down, and holding an open book in my hand, pretending to read from it. These stories were quite lengthy, of full novel length I should think, and I kept up the habit until I was fifteen. My first novel, 'The Tramping Methodist,' was written when I was eighteen, and the interval between the two styles was not great. When the novel was finished, I sent it to The Society of Authors' reading branch, and then, helped and encouraged by them, to the Literary Agency of London, under the late C. F. Cazenove, who, after about six failures, finally placed it with Messrs. Bell. Thus I began."

MR. JEFFERY FARNOL

"How I began? Well, it must have been when, as a very little lad, I used to sit, round of eye, listening for hours while my father read aloud to us, that the idea of some day telling stories of my own entered my head. Through my father's reading Fenimore Cooper, Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, Dumas, Stevenson, all were familiar to me from my earliest boyhood. At the age of seventeen I was apprenticed to a firm of engineers in Birmingham, and returned on my parents' hands: 'No good for work—always writing.' Then I went to New York, and, in the intervals of scene painting, managed to eke out a not too luxurious living by publishing stories in the magazines. I wrote large portions of 'The Broad Highway' in the great studio, grimy and rat-haunted, at 38th Street and 10th Avenue. It was returned from two publishers, then a third as 'too long and too English.' I sent the MS. to my

mother, who was, and still is, my severest critic, and she gave it to her old friend, Shirley B. Jevons, the editor of *The Sportsman*, who persuaded Sampson Low, Marston and Co., to publish it. It is now in the twenty-first edition."

MRS. (" CONVICT 99 ") MARIE CONNOR LEIGHTON

" I first began to write when about ten years old, and spent a whole summer in copying out a long novel of Mrs. Henry Wood. I expended all my pocket-money in purchasing foolscap, pens and ink, and when I had finished copying out the book, attached my own name to it and sent the whole thing up to a London publisher with a covering letter. It never occurred to me that I was doing anything very wicked until I received the publisher's angry letter in reply. He said that *under my own name* I had sent him a well-known novel by Mrs. Henry Wood, and that the writing of the letter and MS. was evidently that of a child, or he would have taken a very serious view of the matter and begun legal proceedings against me. I was greatly humbled, and, in the future, appended my own name to my own productions only. My excuse for being such a fool was that I had been brought up in a non-literary, military family, and imagined that my theft would not be discovered. But I can still remember the sacrifice I made in walking two miles to the town every week or so, and giving up my 'chocolate' money for the purchase of foolscap."

MR. F. FRANKFORT MOORE

" When I first wrote a book, it was a volume of high-class verse, published (on commission) by Smith and Elder. I took good care that it would sell. I brought all my friends forcibly to the booksellers and *made* them buy it; so I lost nothing on the transaction, except friends—which was very satisfactory."

MR. MORLEY ROBERTS

" When I was a boy of eleven I wrote a book with twenty men and women in it, and married them all off at the end. My first real book, however, was 'The Western Avernus,'

some 93,000 words long. It took me rather less than a lunar month, and was inspired by my experiences during the three years I spent in America in various humble and non-lucrative positions. Indeed, had it not been for the good-natured help of my friend George Gissing, I doubt whether it would ever have been written at all. I used to 'yarn' to him about my trials and tribulations in the Far West until he suggested that I might as well write them. I began rather indifferently, then lived those three years over again, with the result that everything came back to me very vividly, and I actually accomplished the writing of a book which a publisher deemed worth accepting.

"But I never should have done it had it not been for the help and encouragement of George Gissing and W. H. Hudson, the great naturalist of the Argentine. Since then I have written many books, and am now mainly devoting myself to scientific subjects. Of course, I also wrote short stories. There was one which could scarcely be called cheerful, for two men were snowed up, one buried the other, and, after a time, the survivor was so hungry that he took his spade and dug up the other. The rest was left to the reader's imagination.

"Many years ago I revisited the scenes of my early privations, scenes where I had learned a variety of elementary truths. It is better to be a truthful animal than a civilised man; and I learnt many things from horses and cattle and sheep and prairie dogs. On my return visit to America, I went to stay at Los Guilieros, where I had once worked as a stableman, and when, from force of old association, I took up an axe and began to chop wood, the same old Chinese cook rushed out: 'Oh, Mr. Loberts, Mr. Loberts, you no splittee me wood, you too much welly kind gentleman, you no splittee me wood.'

MR. SILAS K. HOCKING

"I made my first attempt at story-writing when I was about seventeen. A prize of £100 was offered for the best Temperance tale, and I thought I would try my luck, so I wrote seven chapters, by which time the characters were

so tangled up and became so utterly inconsistent that I gave it up as a bad job. Ten years later I wrote my first published story, 'Alec Green.' That I wrote simply to pass the time away. I had started to go out, but a downpour of rain drove me back to my study, and I began to write without any clear idea in my head; I had no notion of making a book; it was just an exercise in fiction written in the first person. Somehow the thing grew. 'The more I pulled,' to quote Bunyan, 'the more it came,' and at last a complete story shaped itself in my mind. Ah, me! What a lot of work I have done since then!"

MRS. ALEC TWEEDIE

"Don't most people do things because they *must*? Anyway, I began to write because I had suddenly and unexpectedly to earn an income. My husband, eight years after we were married, died in his sleep and left me with two small boys.

"Lots of people talk about talent, but talent is of no earthly use without application and mighty hard work. Most of us can do more than we do, because most of us never try to do anything. I have earned a living by my pen for twenty years, during which time I have written twenty books (with many editions), and endless articles for the Press and our best magazines.

"The War came, and my two boys had left Cambridge. Both went into it at once. The second was a Red Cross prisoner in Brussels on 16th August, 1914, and was not heard of for nine weeks. Later, he was killed in France (1916) as a Royal Artillery officer near Loos. The elder entered the Tenth Hussars, and, after being with them many months in France, joined the Air Force. He served on both the French and Afghan Frontiers, is the only man who has flown across the Himalayas, and has lately passed the Staff College.

"And, after the War, being worn out with anxiety and War work (nearly forty Y.M.C.A. Huts were put up by money collected by me; I sent the first half million books to France; over 3,000 soldiers and sailors had tea and en-

How Well-known Authors Began to Write 195

tainment on winter Sunday afternoons in my home; the Navy League gave me their special service medal in recognition of the work I did for them; I wrote propaganda for the Food Controller here, and, at the request of the United States Government, for America), I packed up and travelled 50,000 miles in a little more than two years.

“As I began to write without learning how to write, so I took to painting without learning how to paint. Now I can call myself an author-artist, for I sell in both spheres.

“What about the ‘must’?”

“Well, the unexpected ‘must earn an income’ made me begin to write, and I have written for twenty years; the ‘must’ made me paint because War and Death had robbed my home-life, and, worn out, I should have sat down to fret or knit, if ‘must’ had not come as a beckoning angel to open new, delightful, happy interests with colour and brush. Paints have brought solace and happiness and a new interest into my life.”

MISS BEATRICE HARRADEN

“It is a little difficult to recall how I started writing, but I began when very young, and with two ambitions. One was to write for *The Nineteenth Century*, and the other was for *Blackwood's Magazine*. Not one of my articles for *The Nineteenth Century* was accepted, but I had great pleasure in writing them.

“I received some encouragement from my dear friend Mrs. Lynn Linton, and look upon her and Mr. Blackwood as my literary god-parents. I used to go to Mrs. Lynn Linton's ‘At Homes,’ which were very interesting. She was a dearly-beloved friend, and left me her writing-desk in her will. Mrs. Lynn Linton took the greatest interest and pride in my work, and used to write to me when I was in California and keep in touch with me. At first she tried to dissuade me from writing, but when she had read a little sketch of mine, became a firm believer in my work.

“I fell into bad health and went abroad to Switzerland. When I came back, I wrote ‘Ships that Pass in the Night,

and was much surprised at its immediate success. It was written, like all my books, without any fixed idea of a plot, for I never know when I begin what my people are going to do, though I do know what they are. Mr. Blackwood refused to publish it because he believed that it would not sell. Then I sent it to Lawrence and Bullen, and it was accepted. Many people wrote to me about the book. 'You have a sympathetic heart, I am sure. Please send my daughter to Italy to train as a singer for three years.' . . . 'Please send me £300 to finance my new patent, which will benefit yourself and the whole world.' A great many letters reached me from Germany, one, in particular, from a Prussian officer, who told me his age and his regiment, and when he had finished praising me, said that his letter was not to be taken as an offer of marriage.

"I remember telling you when we first met that I gave away most of my library to the poor who could not afford to buy books. I did so because I always thought that we do not do enough for the reading of the people, and that we ought to pass on our books or share them. I have been very keen about it and am still, for my father and mother instilled into me the love of books and their permanent influence on people's lives.

" 'Ships that Pass in the Night' has been translated into French, German, Italian, Swedish, Norwegian, Polish, Russian, Hungarian, Japanese, Dutch, and has also been put into the Braille type for the blind."

THE COUNTESS RUSSELL

("Elizabeth and Her German Garden," etc.)

"How did I first begin to write? It was in the German Garden, when, having produced three babies one after the other and got them as far as the nursery-governess stage, a period of having much more time to myself set in, and I began to write what was really only a diary. I had not written before, and found it pleasant and amusing. Then I came across Alfred Austin's 'Garden that I Love,' and this put it into my head to try and see if anyone would publish my diary, which seemed to me rather like his

How Well-known Authors Began to Write 197

book, except that it wasn't. So I sent it, with the usual tremblings, to Macmillan's, with many stamps for its return. It didn't return, and, as it was a success, I wrote on and wrote all the others.

"I don't usually—and, indeed, I don't like doing it—talk about these things, but your kind appreciation has made me voluble."

CHAPTER XVI.

SOME CLUBS—THEATRICAL AND OTHERWISE

EVERYONE knows all about the big clubs and their social traditions, although an informing chapter might be written as to the changes which came over them during and after the war. Who, for instance, would ever have imagined that the sacred haunts of "The National Liberal" would be desecrated by the presence of affable waitresses in very short skirts maternally advising well-known old gourmets what to eat and what not to eat! Before the National Liberal returned to its own quarters, one had the impression that it had been changed into a kind of glorified Lockhart's. And, I am told, "The Athenæum," where, in old days, a member was not allowed to give a friend a glass of water on the Club premises, now has a dining-room set apart for members and their dinner guests. I, although not a member, once dined there with my greatly-valued friend, its learned librarian, Mr. H. R. Tedder, and wondered how he was going to get me in without breaking the rules. We had dinner in his private room, and I was further privileged to look at the club's bronze statuette of Thackeray. I do not know whether it was the effect of the dinner, the best I can ever recall, but there seemed to be far more legs to the statuette than anything else.

One of the earliest clubs I joined (in 1884) was what was then called "The Playgoers." It was founded by Carl Hentschel and Heneage Mandell, two inveterate "first-nighters." I was once lured to accompany them on the first night of a new play, with the result that, in the rush for admission to the theatre, a lady weighing about twenty stone

jammed me up against the wall and nearly smothered me. She was pulled off from my remains by a friendly Commissionaire, with the sarcastic remark: "You'll get a seat all in good time, Ma'am, without murdering that little gent."

Clement Scott was invited to become the first president of "The Playgoers," but could not see his way to accept this high office, which was then conferred on Addison Bright, who was followed by Jerome K. Jerome. The question of finance was a serious one, and partly solved by Henry Arthur Jones gallantly contributing a cheque for thirty pounds. Among the confirmed "first-nighters" were J. M. Barrie, Jerome, Coulson Kernahan, Bernard Partridge, George A. Lewes, and Clement Scott.

The first formal debate took place on the opening of the club's new premises in 1884 when Henry Arthur Jones read a paper. Among those who lectured during the first four years of the club were Clement Scott, William Archer, A. W. Pinero, Sidney Grundy, Henry Norman, Moy Thomas, Arthur Shirley, John Coleman, Comyns Carr, and Fred Leslie. At that time, apart from the Sunday League* entertainments, there was nothing to engage the attention of those who had no other home life than their modest lodgings. By degrees the first enthusiasm of the members began to abate, and the indefatigable Carl Hentschel, as treasurer (he is possessed of more persuasive and pervasive dynamic force than any man I have ever met), found himself confronted by grave financial difficulties on the club's behalf. When he first accepted the treasurership, the sum of four shillings and twopence was handed over to him as the club's total asset. Hentschel held the position of treasurer up to 1900, until "the great split" occurred and the club divided into "The Playgoers" and "The O.P.," Hentschel casting in his lot with the "O.P." "The Playgoers" have been installed for some years in the two top floors above the Leicester Square Tube Station, a position

* I once went on a Sunday League excursion to Dover, and we were met at Dover Station by the inhabitants carrying banners on which was inscribed: "Sinners, return to Town."

which affords a most comprehensive view of the roofs of all London, although Nelson majestically turns his back on them.

Among those who from time to time helped in the original club's debates were Oscar Wilde, Bernard Shaw, I. Zangwill, Jerome, Dr. Aveling, Henry Arthur Jones, Cecil Raleigh, Davenport Adams, J. T. Grein, A. W. Walkley, A. C. Calmour, Cecil Howard, etc. It was Dr. Aveling who created the greatest sensation by his paper on Ibsen (at that time Grein was producing *Ghosts* at the Independent Theatre, and it was a question whether the police would allow its production). The debate was so fast and so furious, and so many desired to take part in it, that it had to be adjourned, and was carried on for three nights. The discussion attracted such men as Jope Slade, Zangwill, and J. F. Nesbit. Hentschel also brought off another *grand coup* by securing Tree to deliver a lecture.

In 1900 the membership of 400 had increased to 1,000. Hentschel was twice president, and during his presidency many successful dinners were given. They had to be held on Sundays because so many members were actors and could not attend on any other night. On one occasion, Mrs. Ormiston Chant gave a lecture to the Club at St. James's Hall, and the place was so packed that the police had to be called in to clear the staircase and prevent people from trying to get into a hall already crammed.

Sir J. M. Barrie was a member of "The Playgoers" in 1885. He paid one visit to the club. Unfortunately, no one else was there but the "charwoman," and, as he afterwards wrote to Hentschel, she thought he had designs on the library and eyed him with such suspicion that he never came again.

The "first nights" of the original "Playgoers" were not without incidents of various kinds. On the first night of *Aladdin* at the Gaiety, on Christmas Eve, 1880, when the pittites got in they found the first two rows of seats taken away and included in the stalls. In those days such an act could not be allowed to pass without protest—pandemonium—shouts for the manager throughout the whole of

Some Clubs—Theatrical and Otherwise 201

the first piece, which was appropriately called *The Silent Woman*. On the fall of the curtain, Mr. Soutar came forward, apologised, and offered to return the first-nighters their money.

On another first night at the Savoy when the pittites got in after a long wait, they found some twenty persons already occupying the front seats. The pittites bundled several of them into the stalls and the others vanished of their own accord.

Irving was hissed on one occasion only—on the first playing of his “*Malvolio*.” When he made his customary speech, very tactfully, and with some regret, he referred to “the strange element” which had crept into the house that night.

The first night of *The Promise of May* was in every respect memorable. Mr. Gladstone was present, the play was not going too well, and an unfortunate line spoken by Herman Vezin in the last act fairly doubled up the pit. The line in question was in the bedroom scene, and, strange to say, its ambiguity had never been noticed at rehearsal.

Clement Scott often had differences of opinion with actors, managers and first-nighters. After a quarrel with Charles Wyndham, Scott was refused admission to the stalls and the first-nighters obligingly found him a seat in the pit.

On a first night at “The Garrick” (I think it was *Valentine and Orson*) the show was going to pieces badly. Just prior to this, Lonnen, who was in the play, had made a big success with his Ballyhooly and Killalo songs. The pit was so “fed up” that it stopped the performance and made Lonnen sing Killalo. Then the play was allowed to go on.

I am indebted to my friend, Mr. T. McDonald Rendle, one of the best after-dinner speakers in all London, and the most resourceful of our many resourceful members, for the following anecdotes about various incidents which have happened during the Club’s triumphal progress:

“At the starting of the O.P. Club it was necessary to cut the garment according to the cloth. The premises

selected for the convenience of members failed to appeal to every taste, and at the annual meeting the question was brought forward for discussion. The chairman evinced a decided disinclination to encourage any progressive views, but enquired what the malcontent members desired. 'What do you want the premises to be?' he asked. 'More palatorial' came the reply."

"On the occasion of a smoking concert, the chairman apologised for a feeble recitation which he had offered. 'I hope to expatiate my offence on a future date,' he added. 'At present, we must all feel that we have enjoyed a really good supper. But it would not become me to expiate on that.'"

"The peculiarities of the Hibernian temperament were quaintly illustrated by an incident which occurred in the O.P. Club's unregenerate days. Hearing a disturbance in the lobby one evening, an official rushed out and discovered a man lying on the floor with his head being periodically and violently bumped by a gentleman leaning over him. The thwacks were of a resounding and alarming character. 'What are you doing?' enquired the astonished beholder. 'Don't you interfere' replied the Irish operator, giving the victim another bump. 'This is an old bosom friend of mine!'"

"The late Fred Emnly, the actor, never pardoned the O.P. Club for a loss he alleged had been inflicted on him by one of the members. Knowing nothing of horse-racing, he had been imprudently lured into making a wager about the solitary Derby he remembered. 'I recollect it simply because it was with Mr. Challacombe, and that is the name of the vicar of our parish.' After accepting the bet of a sovereign from a member who challenged the statement, Emnly found he had lost, and paid up with a bad grace. He had mixed up the Derby with the St. Leger. But he brought forward the incident at an annual dinner, advancing it as a solid reason for regarding O.P. members as non-respectable persons. 'The only other member I know,' he said, 'is a person who writes comic songs—at least, they are described as comic on the outside cover.' This testi-

monial was not at all to the taste of the Club poet, though it delighted everybody else. Fred Emnly never forgave the winner of that sovereign."

At one of the dinners, Sir William Gilbert paid an eloquent tribute to his deceased colleague. "Sullivan," he said, "was a composer of the rarest genius. It is a source of great gratification to me to reflect that the rift which parted us was completely bridged over, and that at the time of Sir Arthur's death the most cordial relations existed between us."

The headquarters of the O.P. Club are now at the Craven Hotel, off the Strand, where members find pleasant, cosy, and comfortable rooms devoted to their use. The club's main aim is to gather together a number of persons mutually interested in the Theatre and anxious to discuss its ever-varying affairs in a sympathetic, disinterested, and independent manner. It has come of age, and the principal responsibility devolving upon it is to make sure that the record of the future shall be as happy and prosperous as that of the past. Lord Dunsany is the president for 1922 (his predecessors were Lord Dewar and Lord Leverhulme), and my friend Thomas Downey is the vice-president. I hold the record as vice-president, having been elected for three years in succession. Lord Dunsany, in spite of his shaggy locks, has a very delightful personality, and is blessed with many interesting ideals. His speech at a club dinner last year, where he was hailed as president-elect, furnished most of the people there with ideals also, and he promises to be a worthy addition to the long line of distinguished presidents who have preceded him. Thomas Downey, the vice-president, is the celebrated "Captious Critic" of *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, and, chatting with him one day at the club, as he drew the caricature of me which graces this volume, I asked him to tell me about his early days.

"Very well," he said, "if it won't bore you. It was under tragic circumstances that I drew my first 'Captious Critic' series. At the time, I was giving occasional help to that 'prince of caricaturists'—the best of modern times

as Edmund Yates called him in *The World*—and *The World* was an authority then—Alfred Bryan, who had been for some years the Captious Artist of *The Sporting and Dramatic*. ‘You might give a look in at the Apollo Theatre to-night,’ Bryan said to me one morning. ‘I’m not feeling up to much and you can lend a hand with the sketches.’ I went to the show and the next morning received a telegram, ‘Come over at once. Alfred ill. Mrs. Bryan.’

“The doctor had warned me that Bryan’s health was precarious, but to find my dear old friend and tutor dead at his breakfast table with his half-finished sketches by his side, and a pencil note placed on the drawing slope, ‘Send for Tom Downey to finish these before he does anything else’ (that ever-ruling passion of the pressman to get his ‘copy’ in obsessed him), was a shock I shall never forget.

“Amid tears, I contrived to complete the humorous sketches of Fred Eastman, Evie Green, Kitty Cutler, etc. The proprietors of the *Sporting and Dramatic* asked me to fill the gap left by Bryan, and, they being indulgent enough not to be too critical for a few weeks, I have done so ever since.

“In those days it was the only thing of the sort; at the present, most of the weeklies are paying *The Sporting and Dramatic* the sincerest form of flattery.

“Although I drifted more into working under Alfred Bryan, I was really the pupil of genial old Horace Morehen—one of the first of the poster artists drawing on stone. He did all the big poster pictures for the Royal Aquarium.

“About that time, too, I served a period in the House of Commons gallery, sketching the members for *Moonshine*.

“J. A. Shepherd, the animal artist who made such a feature of his Zig Zags at the Zoo for *The Strand*, was also Bryan’s pupil, and we all worked in a studio at the top of Chancery Lane.

“Bryan was a true Bohemian, beloved by all the Bohemian world, and not a little pestered by the impecunious members of the delightful community. Many inter-

esting types drifted up to that studio when we were working late in the evening, which was pretty nearly always. Little Tich, for Bryan's opinion of some pen and ink sketches he had done; Harry Randall, to hum over a fresh tune; Dan Leno, who was a pretty good man with the pencil; Fred Leslie, too, the greatest of performers in burlesque; and many others were in the habit of popping in.

"I well recall one dignified old specimen of the 'Barnstormer' type, with rubicund countenance, oily ringlets curling over a fur collar, one hand in coat tails the other in his breast, à la Vincent Crummies: 'Yer-er-myrmidon was somewhat curt with me, but I forgive the lad.' I was the 'myrmidon,' and by evasive answers had endeavoured to keep the old boy out, well knowing that his entrance meant good-bye to our frugal repast which Bryan's goodness of heart would make him offer, and that, incidentally, the 'Barnstormer' would borrow a little of the 'ready.'

"The 'Barnstormer' had a lofty way of affecting no knowledge of contemporary actors. 'This fellow round the corner, how call you him? Irwine? Jerving? Ah, I thank you—Irving—living on my brains you know.'

"Henry Irving was then playing in *The Bells*, and we well knew that he had behaved in a princely manner to this, the author.

"One evening, a little later on, as Bryan and I were crossing Gray's Inn Road, we mingled in a small street crowd. There had been an accident and our picturesque old visitor had had his last 'call.' It was Leopold Lewis, author of *The Bells*, being taken to the hospital to die, knocked down, I think, by a cab."

Then there is the "Highgate Thirty Club," of which my old friend, cheery Dyke Wilkinson, an uncle of Jeffery Farnol, was a shining light. He wrote his first novel ("Her Ladyship") last year at the ripe age of eighty-seven (Her Majesty and Princess Mary were graciously pleased to accept copies), and began what he calls his "wasted life" as commercial traveller, then became a "bookie" and founder of the first halfpenny paper, and owner of the Highgate cable cars. His book, "A Wasted Life,"

created a good deal of interest in the sporting world, and the "Rough Roads" he travelled were highly entertaining. As a youth of fifteen he adventured into poetry, but gave it up after writing an ode on the death of the Duke of Wellington:—

The Iron Duke is dead—cruel and brave
His hard steel heart death shall anneal,
And he whose word filled fat full many a grave,
Now makes the grave a meal!

When he tried getting rich quickly as a "bookie," he invented a system which failed to work:—

I found myself on Friday an utterly ruined man. Not all the bright gold brooches, earrings and other ornaments in our establishment, stock-in-trade, household effects, with all our worldly belongings, would have sufficed to settle with the "bookies" on the following Monday. In the vulgar parlance of the turf, I was obliged to "take the knock."

He was once so badly mauled by welshers, his leg being broken at the ankle, and the joint dislocated, that the muscles never became sound again.

The "Thirty Club" meets once a week at "The Angel" in Highgate, under the secretaryship of Walter K. Jealous, the indefatigable editor of *The Hampstead and Highgate Express*. Jealous is a great authority on the antiquities of Highgate, and revived the old ceremony of "Swearing on the Horns." The invitation to members runs, "Herein fail not at your peril." The "swearing" took place in a low-ceiled, oak-raftered room with the huge head of a buffalo on the walls, and portraits, dotted over with medals, of departed "Grand Buffaloes." After Jealous had read a preliminary statement describing the origin of this ancient custom, the neophytes were turned out of the room for ten minutes and then solemnly recalled by the ringing of a cracked sepulchral bell.

On the wall at the far end of the room was a life-size cheerful charcoal sketch of a skeleton. At a small table sat the President, the Clerk, and "Father." They all wore false red noses of Gargantuan dimensions, and gorgeous red robes. The President donned a black fool's cap with

mystic letters in white. By the witness box, a table on its side, stood the holder of the ram's horns, which were mounted on a broomstick. He was attired in a dark green smock, red wig, and a false nose of the ruddiest. The usher's official costume consisted of a red nose and a redder collar. His trousers seemed dingy in comparison.

The first victim to be sworn was confronted by the President with a twenty-thousand-pound cheque which he was alleged to have forged. Whilst cheerfully admitting his guilt, he deeply regretted that it was not for double the amount, and was about to receive his certificate after he had kissed the horns, when the melancholy voice of a bystander from the end of the room wailed out, "Who's pinched my pot of beer?" The President abruptly told the owner of the missing beverage that he did not care who stole it, but notwithstanding this rebuke the melancholy voice wailed on, "I bought it, I lost it, somebody's pinched it"; and the victim continued to call for his lost beer throughout the proceedings.

When my name was called, the President declared that I was charged with having written sundry novels which were a danger to the community. Had I any excuse to offer? I threw myself "upon the mercy of the Court." "This alleged author," said the President, "so gloats over his literary crimes that he had better kiss the horns at once lest worse iniquities come to light." So I signed a book, and was given a certificate that I had been sworn upon the horns in accordance with the ancient custom and duly admitted a Freeman of Highgate. The other victims met with similar treatment.

The custom has lasted for three hundred years, and originated with the Scotch cattle drovers who halted at "The Flask" for the night on their way to London. A collection from the "freemen" was spent in a joint carousal after they had been sworn on the horns of a live bullock which was brought to the inn door.

As I went away, a familiar wail from the ancient porch floated past me into the night: "Who pinched my pot of beer?"

On ordinary nights, there is a discussion on a topic of the week, or "a social evening." Charles Robinson, as artistic as he is witty, generally contrives to confound the orator of the evening with some logically advanced absurdity which leaves his victim without a leg to stand on until he is rescued by the sound common sense of the gifted secretary.

Another club, of a widely different character, of which, although my ignorance of the technicalities of stamp collecting is colossal, I confidently became the secretary on condition that I never did any of the work, is "The Herts Philatelic Society." Its genial and able President, Mr. Harry L. Hayman, insisted that my name would grace his list, and that after the stamp part of the evening was over, I could add a literary charm to the evening by telling "chestnuts." We meet at Pagani's, and the order of the evening is that the President invariably announces his intention of resigning because of the shortcomings of the members. Then the peccant members wipe away their tears and he consents to remain in office, five minutes afterwards genially offering his best cigars to the offenders. Somebody reads a paper on the stamps of New Zealand or Nova Scotia, and about a thousand sheets of mysterious-looking stamps are passed round, the members delightedly examining them through magnifying glasses and informing me that such and such a stamp is worth at least a hundred pounds. Some have a different watermark, others have a figure upside down, still more have figures downside up; and so we go on for an hour. The sheets are collected, the table cleared and supper brought in, and the rest of the evening is either devoted to an interesting address by Percy Ashley, C.B., or we tell yarns. The worst of it is that new members insist on asking me what "I specialise in." I don't know what I specialise in, and return evasive answers, with the result that the new members think I am keeping some very rare and valuable collection up my sleeve. Matters came to a climax when the local tax-gatherer sent me a friendly note asking for some money, and I inadvertently put a three-halfpenny stamp on my envelope instead of a two-

Some Clubs—Theatrical and Otherwise 209

penny one. He sorrowfully wrote back to say the fraud must be intentional as he had heard so much of my philatelic standing that he could never believe I did not know a three-halfpenny stamp from a twopenny one. Mr. Hayman, besides possessing one of the most valuable stamp collections in the world, is well known for the good work he did in Belgium during the war—work in which he was zealously seconded by “The Herts Philatelic”—and has been given the Order of Leopold, for services rendered to Belgium during the War; he also has the Belgian Order of the Crown for helping trade and commerce, and many other decorations. Though one of the kindest and cheeriest of men, he has been compelled by the force of public opinion to remove me from my high office and substitute a man who really does know something about stamps. Now, I am dodging his well-meant attempts to impart information to me on the subject of Mulready envelopes. He once valued a collection of stamps left to a friend of mine. “The stamps would be very good if all the valuable ones were not forgeries,” he wrote. “If your friend will take thirty pounds for his stamps I can get it for him.” The man who bought the stamps took them with him to Brighton, left them in a taxi, and they were never heard of more. It turned out that the original owner had paid large sums of money for years past in the belief that they were genuine.

“The Yorick” is another club largely given over to actors, authors, and journalists. During the war the Government did its best to disintegrate it by driving us from one habitation to another. Just when we had settled down with our household gods—a collection of caricatures by Sime, and a bust of that last surviving Bohemian, Odell—like the Wandering Jew, we had to move on again. In the words of the poet (slightly modified):—

From place to place they hurried us,
To banish our regret,
And when they won a smile from us,
They thought we would forget—

all their inhumanity. To the lasting despair of Bernard and Bacon, the joint secretaries, the bust of Odell was chipped,

the caricatures had their frames broken; but, undismayed, when we had found rest for the soles of our feet, we again set up our household gods and once more invoked "the Yorick spirit" to keep us together. This same "Yorick spirit" is a thing to be felt and not described. All the members know each other and take an interest in one another's doings. During the war we received fraternal messages from our members at the Front, and said to ourselves: "It's all right. We can't lose the war with all those Yorickers putting things straight." From Bedford Street to St. Martin's Lane, from St. Martin's Lane to the hospitable "Playgoers," we wearily wandered, seeking not a club house but a home. At last we have settled down in Denman street in sumptuous premises where our much-travelled household gods look a little battered and tired. The caricatures have been so long covered up that they blink at the light of day, and the bust of Odell is not what it was. There is also a very fine full-length portrait of him by Ernest Moore, wherein he is depicted as returning home late at night to the Charterhouse, in whose chaste seclusion he now spends his venerable days, with the yellow eyes of the Charterhouse cat surveying him from a corner with a "welcome home again, brother," kind of expression.

Though Odell's voice is a little weakened by age, his elocution is so perfect that not a syllable is missed. When the time approaches for a recitation from him, he sits in a corner wrapped in meditation. "I pray thee forbear; I am not yet ready," he says majestically. After we have forborne two or three times, he suddenly gets up, an impressive figure, with age-silvered beard, and delivers himself:—

I think Crab, my dog, be the sourest-natured dog that lives; my mother weeping, my father wailing, my sister crying, our maid howling, our cat wringing her hands, and all our house in a great perplexity, yet did not this cruel-hearted cur shed one tear; he is a stone, a very pebble stone, and has no more pity in him than a dog; a Jew would have wept to have seen our parting; why, my grandam, having no eyes, look you, wept herself blind at my parting!

We have revels, and the master of the revels is the Peter Pan-like George Parlby, who is, in reality, about

Some Clubs—Theatrical and Otherwise 211

seventy, but has never grown up. He is "Yorick," the club jester.

"A fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy," full of gibes, gambols, songs, and flashes of merriment that "set the table in a roar." I can no more imagine "The Yorick" without him than I can think of the piano without Odell's bust on the top of it. Parlbly wears the jester costume—there is a very fine portrait of him in cap and bells—and when the "revels" take place, he writes the piece, makes the costumes, rehearses it, and bursts upon us with his companions in crime with doggerel allusions to our weaknesses and quaint hits at our foibles, until the pale face of "Uncle" Smith dimples into babelike smiles, the features of our Honorary Caterer for the Wine Department, James Chapman, and Harry Buss, Dr. Miller and Walter Grogan, relax, and we are all children together.

A. C. R. Carter, of the beautifully-phrased speech, is our champion orator, and Sime's caricatures of W. W. Jacobs and Pett Ridge—the latter barely seen from under the shadow of an immense hat—look down from the walls and smile approval on his classic anecdotes. There are dozens of others around our festive board, and when the proceedings have reached a certain stage, cries ring out for Charles Pond: "A recitation, Pond! A recitation!" Whereupon Pond, in his own characteristic manner, gives the club's old favourites. He has a wonderfully resonant voice which produces an inimitable effect. I was listening to him one night when he indulged in a kind of medley and brought in fragments of several pieces, which I jotted down. He began with:—

A WORKING MAN'S DEFENCE OF BEER.

Man likes a talk, and that is why,
When comes the close of day,
Beer never does 'im any 'arm,
Took in a mod'rit way.

"I've seen a 'orrible sight to-night—a public 'ouse to let.

"There's something in a glass away from home you can't explain, but there it is; it don't taste the same in your

own 'ouse, not even if it's fetched from the 'Ouse you're in the habit of using.

" Public 'Ouses does a deal of good, and the most important thing is to live near a good one; not only a good one, but a busy one. Beer, no matter how good, ain't no use without a quick draught, particklerly since the war. It's given me a lot of trouble finding a good draught stout for the Missus; and she wants it, standing as she does twelve and thirteen hours a day against a washtub, wringing her heart out. She wants beer—beer with a brown 'ead on it. Just now we're very lucky with beer. Me and the Missus wanted a couple of rooms, and I found some as 'ud suit us if the neighbourhood was all right for beer. So I sampled the nearest 'Ouse and called for a glass of stout and mild—which I drinks in the daytime. I tasted the stout through the mild: it was stright. Then I took the Missus her next pay-night and called for a glass of stout for her. Mind you, I hadn't said a word to her.

" She sampled it and hadn't worked through the froth afore her eye went on the swivel.

" ' How's that? ' I says.

" ' Food, dear, ' she says.

" I says: ' There's rooms close by.'

" ' Take 'em, ' she says."

Then we had portions of " Evings's Orspittle for Dogs " :—

" EVINGS'S ORSPITTLE.

" Evings has got to understand his wife now, though not before he'd done time for her twice. She had a bit of money and thought she was going to rule the roost, but she never opens her mouth now afore she's spoke to.

" Evings's Orspittle is doing all right—full up; leastways, he always says so, and makes the ladies bring their dogs *twice* now. What an artist! He codded a lady to leave her dog with him while she went to India; half a guinea a week, 'cause 'e's supposed to be fed on chicken, and him nearly choking 'isself getting outside the tripe. He sees nothing

Some Clubs—Theatrical and Otherwise 213

else, and is as strong as a little lion. Evings has cured him of dyspepsia eleven times."

The British Workman in various phases:—

" HIS TOOLS.

" My tools looks like stopping down. And when I lays 'em down, I lays 'em down. I'm able to do a bit now towards the housekeeping with my 'dole,' which seems like lasting. Though the 'bus fares is a penny again, it's only a manoever of the Company to lower wages.

" Very little talking in the Park on Sundays this cold weather, so I've learned a grand thing off by heart which I put across them when I get the chance: ' What's Intellec Give For? ' If every child learnt it, we should come into our own.

We wants more men like Leverhulme,
And this 'ere Mister Ford,
What raises wages, shortens hours,
Don't leave us to the Lord;
Makes everybody happy,
Gets a bit themselves as well,
Is satisfied with earth without
A 'eaven or a 'ell.

Religion! What's religion done
But keep the worker poor?
This is a age of common sense—
What's my intellec give for!
I've done without religion,
Was 'on my own' at ten,
With wife and kid at seventeen,
Earned more than many men.

Religion? Bah! You never knows
Who's on the gospel wheeze!
Our kid's in a reformat'ry—
They've got her on her knees.
Her mother's took to drink through it—
I chucked her long ago.
Kids isn't worth the bringing up—
A father ought to know!

" There's no doubt if I could get someone to build me a theayter, I could fill it, Sundays as well, with this."

I "happened" into the Club one day to lunch, and Harry Buss told Martin Henry and myself a story of how, some years ago, two actors arrived one night at a little town in the north of England and decided to stay for the night. After dinner, they found that there was nothing to do to amuse themselves. At last the maid of the inn suggested that they might play billiards, although the billiard-room had been shut up for years. After a prolonged search, she produced a rusty key, took them below the ground floor to an ancient billiard-room, and unlocked the door. The cloth of the table was cut all over, the cues were broken, and when they turned on the gas they found there was no chalk. In spite of these drawbacks, they managed to have a game of sorts, and early next morning shook the dust of this ancient hostelry off their feet and departed. Some two years later one of the actors happened to be in the same town, and the same maid met him on the threshold of the inn. "I remember your face, sir," she said beamingly. "I've got a little account for you to settle." "Little account! I thought we paid up for everything." "You locked the billiard-room door when you came out and brought me the key, sir; but Master went down there *six months afterwards* and found *you'd forgotten to turn off the gas!*"

PART II.—CANADA

CHAPTER I.

OFF TO FOUR CORNERS

NOW, Gentle Reader, for the time being we have practically finished with authors in all their phases, and are going for "a run round" Four Corners and other places "contagious" thereto. There you will receive the most delightful hospitality in the world; we shall start by the first boat of the season for Montreal; and, until you experience the rigorous though bracing cold of a Canadian winter, you will want to stop at Four Corners for the rest of your life.

It does not greatly matter, however, where you travel nowadays, for, on returning home again, you will generally find that the man next door has "gone one better," and, besides, there is always some quiet, unobtrusive old lady who can give the masculine traveller points. A good many years ago it used to be the fashion to travel largely through unfrequented parts of Spain, and I can remember a dinner party to meet a lion who had returned from there. The ladies hung on his tales of derring-do, loved him for the dangers he had passed, and no one else could get in a word edgewise. "And then," said the distinguished traveller, "the night was coming on, the mountain path grew narrower and narrower and forked right and left. After much hesitation, I took the path to the right."

“You would have done much better if you had taken it to the left. I did when I was there,” said a meek little old lady whom no one had noticed. Similarly when one keeps to the right, there is always the person who has been to the left.

Still, there is a good deal of room in the Atlantic Ocean, and the route sometimes varies, especially if there be a fog. When I resolved to visit Four Corners again, this reflection comforted me, for the only people who do not contradict you about the Atlantic are those who have gone to the bottom of it.

The accepted idea is that the traveller goes down to the sea in ships; it will be found on mature consideration that one ship is enough for anyone who is not greedy—sometimes it is too much. I took my passage on the s.s. *Lake Ontario*, of the Beaver Line (it is called the Beaver Line because, for the first two or three days of the voyage, the passengers, in various ways, are kept as busy as beavers), and prepared to brave the dangers of the deep. It was raining when I went on board the tender at Liverpool—just enough to spoil my new hat. It did.

Then we puffed and fussed away from the landing-stage, feeling that we were leaving our country for our country's good as well as for our own. All the people sniffed about in the rain, trying to find out who was who. “I hear there's to be a nauthor on board,” said one old gentleman. “Can't abear those nauthors; they makes my 'ead ache.” I told him I was a tea merchant, and he at once took me to his great heart. Next came a fine, fat parson who had been ordered a voyage because, although habitually sending his congregation to sleep, he suffered from insomnia. This lack of sleeping power did not interfere with his appetite, for he nearly caused a famine on board. There was also the director of a Gas Company; he had a popular reception. I did not have a reception of any kind, except from two girls who got into my cabin by mistake and indignantly ordered me out of it.

It was good to enter a cabin again; it was also good to find that my cabin companion had provided himself with

a silver-mounted revolver in order, as he naïvely explained, "to protect myself against road agents." But he was a nice boy, and, as we became confidential, asked whether he would be allowed to capture a squaw who would work for him in his old age. He also expressed a manly desire for scalps, but did not say whose. The poor lad was so sea-sick the next morning that I could easily have taken his. Just before the end of the voyage, I heard him confide to a girl outside our cabin door: "It's pretty rough on a man when he's shot a buffalo round Winnipeg and hasn't anyone to cook it for him." "Would I do?" she cooed.

We had a gorgeous dinner, with flowers in the middle of the table. Prudence whispered: "Let that dinner alone." Inclination retorted: "Have a farewell feed while you can." Then we went to bed early and prayed that our stomachs might not be led into temptation. Something went wrong with our prayers—and our stomachs. We embarked on Tuesday; on Thursday morning we were all wrecks.

Friday was a day of scorching sunshine, and the cheery ship's doctor got us all up on deck and sent the "Intermediates" a challenge to play at shuffle board. They accepted the challenge and beat us, and the Captain tried hard not to look ashamed of our efforts; but it is a difficult thing to concentrate your attention on shuffle board when you have to make a rush for the ship's side and commune with the Atlantic.

Then came a bitterly cold Saturday. With the exception of a baby, the passengers were one vast heap of undiluted misery. Our stomachs cried aloud to the deep sea; the deep sea took all they had to offer and, like Oliver Twist, asked for more. Even the gulls became fastidious and declined to be interested in our offerings to Neptune. Slowly and sadly we went to bed; slowly and sadly we arose the next morning. Quickly we rushed to the ship's side and deposited votive offerings to critical gulls. Then we wrapped ourselves in our misery and rugs and great coats and tried to sleep.

Sunday, not so many votive offerings to the gulls when they made their morning collection. I had a cure for sea-sickness which upset everyone who tried it. The Lemonites quarrelled with the Gingerbreadnutites, and the Belfast aleites sniffed at both. One old lady had a marvellous theory that the best way to cure sea-sickness was to lie flat on your back and put a loaded coal-scuttle on your front; but the movement of the ship made this difficult, and she found few adherents. Another old lady believed in the efficacy of "silent prayer," and yet another longed to be a man so that she might fittingly tell the Atlantic what she really thought of it.

At eleven o'clock we had "service" on board, conducted by the sleepless parson with the voice of an eighty-ton gun. He said that he would "lead us," and boomed away until there was no health in us, and we all longed for death. But he had resolved that we should not die until, like the gulls, he had made a collection. He made a collection, and freed us after we had sung: "For those in peril on the Sea."

Monday morning dawned cold as the smile of a newly officiating and self-conscious churchwarden, and we hoped to sight Cape Race on Tuesday, and to get out of the eternal circle of grey. Breakfast was at eight after an early cup of tea, beef-tea at eleven, lunch at one, tea at four, dinner at six, sandwiches at eight, bed about nine. The mealy-faced steward who looked after the bathroom turned on a steam-pipe by mistake, and I had to gather unto myself a handful of clothing and finish my toilet in the passage, whilst he argued that he could not have used the wrong tap. The interested passengers thought that a new variety of human lobster (the red patches on me puzzled them) had invaded the passage.

After Cape Race nothing happened until we reached Quebec. There it rained stolidly and damped our historical enthusiasm as we gazed at the hoary old citadel. It rained until we reached Montreal, thus spoiling the best part of the trip up the picturesque St. Lawrence, with its

quaint little farmhouses dotted along the banks. Every village had its tin-roofed church, which shone through the rain.

A thin, walnut-coloured individual slouched up at the Montreal Customs House and entered into conversation with me. "Ever been in this God-forsaken hole afore?" he asked, expectorating with great accuracy at a harmless portmanteau.

"Oh, yes; and mean to come again if God is good to me."

"Whaffor? Done a bunk?"

"No. Just want to run round and see things. Nice, fine, growing weather."

"Growing be—blessed. Where bound?"

"To the Land of the Ponema, to the village of Four Corners, where the Rudyards cease from Kipling, and the Haggards ride no more."

"Guess you ain't been there lately, then!"

"Why, what d'you know about it?"

"Know them Donovans as lives two miles out?"

"Of course; some of my dearest friends."

"My mother's aunt married one of them Donovans. Where you going to put up?"

"At Uncle James's—at the gaol—always do."

"Guess his father married a Donovan, too. Darn my eyes, you're 'most a relation of mine."

"Very glad to hear it. Now, as we're relations, you've got to help me through the Customs."

The weary-eyed man hunted up a brother Customs House officer, evidently his superior. "A relation of mine going to Four Corners. Be good to him."

When the second officer saw that I was carrying a peculiarly-shaped case, his face became stern. "Any brandy or cigars there?"

"Of course not; it's a typewriter."

"Made in Montreal?"

"No; they can't make one like it in Montreal, thank God; they've more self-respect. I've lugged this thing all the way over. Wish I'd dropped it in the Atlantic."

“ You’ll wish that again before I’ve done with you. Heaps of typewriters are made in Montreal. You might have hired it. I’ll have to charge you duty.”

“ That ain’t no way to treat my relations,” protested the first officer.

“ You go along and attend to the emigrants. Now, sir, you come with me.”

“ What for? You can’t arrest me for having a typewriter.”

“ No; but I don’t know how much I’ve got to fix you for it; and there’s only one man here who does know.”

“ Have we to tramp all over the place to find him? ”

“ Guess so. Pick that thing up and come along.”

After we had gone twice round the shed, the exercise began to pall on the Customs House man. “ I’ll let you off for five dollars.”

“ Not a cent unless you produce the man who knows.”

“ I’ve all the day before me. We’ll go on looking for that man.”

After we had made the circuit of the shed (I induced him to carry the heavy typewriter) five or six times, the Customs House man changed what he called his mind. “ You won’t pay up? ”

“ No. Produce your proper schedule and I’ll pay.”

“ Guess you’re bluffing.”

“ Guess again. I’m in deadly earnest.”

We went twice more round the shed, and other officials, under the impression that it was a weight-carrying walking match, began to bet on us.

At last my enemy gave in. “ Can’t find the man at all. Guess you can go.”

This was his most successful guess, and I went—thankfully.

The rain ceased during the night and, by way of a change, the next morning the last belated snow of the season began to fall. The sun shone through it as I climbed into the car to start for Four Corners, some seventy miles away. The cars were stiflingly hot, and the urbane being who collected

the tickets (he is called a conductor in Canada) was hot also, owing to a dispute with a drunken passenger, which resulted in the aforesaid passenger being "fired" from the train ("fired," by the way, is to be found in "Paradise Lost") and left in the snow. "'Tain't fair on the clean, white snow," said the conductor, wiping his heated brow, "to leave a tough like that in it."

This Canadian Pacific Railway is the most wonderful line in the world; it can show you the most sublime scenery—scenery which humbles you before God, takes the taint out of your soul, and makes you adjust your relative importance to the rest of the universe. And its cars are the perfection of modern luxury and comfort.

There is no fuss about taking tickets before you enter the car. When you have started comfortably and are admiring the luxury around you, the conductor puts a ticket in your hatband, whence he can extract it when he wants it, and tells you the price. He also adds that he will let you know where to get off. Before reaching a station he calls out the name of it, brings a thirsty baby a dipper of water, helps an old lady with her "grip," and shows some primitive countrywoman from "way back" how to get off with her face to the engine. A story is told of one old lady's first experience on a train. As luck would have it, another train smashed into hers. Everyone was a bit shaken except the old lady, who remained quite placid. "Weren't you scared?" asked the conductor. "You do pull up a bit sudden," admitted the old lady, thinking that it was all in the day's programme, "but it's kinder rousin' for the liver."

The train rounds a curve, and rising suddenly before you, towering heavenward with majestic summits, behold the maple-crowned Laurentians! Think of it! Think of this overwhelming beauty and contrast it with—Fleet Street.

"Guess," says the conductor, "Four Corners is over t'other side of the river. You'll have to get out at the Calumet. Seen Doc. Drummond's little book of poems? He's got one about the Curé of the Calumet. That bit

where the Curé comes along in the darkness ringing his death-bell's mighty fine. How's it go? Oh, yes:—

An' de buggy rush down de hillside an' over de bridge below,
W'ere creek run so high on de spring-tam, w'en mountain t'row off de
snow.

An' so long as we hear heem goin', we kneel on de floor and pray
Dat God will look after de Curé an' de poor soul dat's passin' away.

“ You bet, sir, what Doc. Drummond don't know about habitants ain't worth knowing. Glad to have met you. Stay! ”

He searches his memory.

“ Why, you came along here four years ago. I remember now. Got any more yarns like that one of the cow in the chimney? Well, well, it's real friendly of you to come again.”

It is now noon, and the Four Corners steamer has not waited for this train. The river is three miles wide, and there are no boats about.

“ Better cross by the ferry,” says the lame Baggage Master. “ Hire a horse and buggy, get ferried over, and there you are.”

The lame Baggage Master, after a brief conflict with my portmanteau, in which the portmanteau is ignominiously worsted, goes into his office, and I look across the line. The mountains rise up and up and up and carry one's soul with them. Then the Baggage Master returns and suggests, “ Better take a bite of suthin.”

Curiously enough, to an Englishman, the refreshment room is a place where one can really refresh. There are appetising plates of pie—not the paleolithic sandwiches of the London suburbs, but real God-given and Canadian-made pie—that gladdeneth the stomach of man. And there are many other things all equally good. The pretty maid at the counter has the sparkling eyes of Old France, her ribbons are so many coloured lures to lead one to the counter, and she moves with the slender grace of a larch swaying in the breeze.

A buggy comes along, and the good little black Canuck pony gallops down to the river, past whirring sawmills,

past happy children, past huge craft filling up with blocks for the pulp-makers, past fragrant heaps of freshly-sawn lumber, until such a barge as that whereon Elaine journeyed to meet her knight glides slowly towards the shore. It is fastened to a sunk cable in some mysterious way. Charon labours at it with a big oar. When it touches the bank we walk on, horse and all, and cross the river.

The flood of liquid amber bears us swiftly away; over the water sounds a snatch of song; the bells chime as we gallop up to Four Corners gaol to meet old friends like "Uncle James and Aunt Milly." We have reached "the haven of our desire," and the haven is unchanged.

In a few days the land is full of the sweet odours of spring. Friends fuss round me as if I were an invalid. "Fill him up with good food," says Uncle James, "and he'll do good work when he goes back." Go back! Who wants to go back? It makes one shiver, even on the sunlit verandah, to think of going back. You are a "Canuck," and plant potatoes and chop wood as to the manner born.

There is one thing, however, you do not want to do, and so you let the village printing-offices severely alone, until Colonel Draper of *The Four Corners Gazette*, and Mr. Driffle of *The Herald*, temporarily renounce their blood feud and call together to know what is the matter, and whether you are going to contribute any more gifted articles to their respective "organs."

If people were dying they sent for Uncle James, as of yore, to ease the journey; if they were going to get married they took his advice with equal solemnity. The children, too, all loved him, and he showed an added tenderness to those who were ill or afflicted. When impatient young couples "dumped" aged relatives on him at the gaol, they did it with a light-hearted consciousness that the time-worn ones were in for a good thing. It is true that there was one little drawback to the society at Uncle James's gaol. All the county lunatics were there, awaiting their turn for

a vacancy in one of the big asylums. Until then they remained in the gaoler's charge, together with a few illicit whisky sellers, one or two "drunks," and various ladies who were in enforced retirement for petty thefts. Of course, there were class distinctions, even in gaol. One poor imbecile, who fancied himself a bicycle, obstinately refused to mingle with common clay, and the Old Habitant, who had been there for years, was too far gone in senile decay to take much notice of anyone. A couple of sprightly youths, who had smashed store windows for "fun," spent most of their days cracking stones. Their attire was, mainly, parti-coloured "pants" and a grey flannel shirt. They seemed to think that as long as they had "le bon tabac" Fate could not hurt them.

After formally making the acquaintance of the various gaol inmates, I went to bed one night and, about three in the morning, was roused from my slumbers by an unearthly yell. It was only a poor old epileptic who thus varied the monotony of the night watches. I suffered a good deal at times waiting for him to yell. He did so every night, but could not be relied upon to yell at a given time. My usual procedure was to sit on the verandah, "'Neath the pale light of stars," and listen to the vibrant wail of distant whip-poor-wills. Sometimes the epileptic started the whip-poor-wills; sometimes the whip-poor-wills started the epileptic; sometimes I was fortunate enough to get them both going together.

One night, however, the epileptic did not yell as usual. He was a poor old habitant who had "deeded" his property to his children. Then they tired of him and brought him down to the gaol, there to end his lonely days. He was lame, obstinate, and always wanted to have his own way. His aged, suffering face became a constant reproach to their own light-hearted gaiety, and so a complaisant magistrate declared that the old man was not fit to be at large.

As I sat on the verandah watching the solemn stars, seeing the silver moonlight playing over the Ottawa flood, hearing the shrill pipings of the little green frogs and the

raucous bellowings of the big ones, the assistant gaoler came out and leaned wearily against a post.

"Guess the old man's passing in his checks," he yawned. "Wish he'd hurry up. I want to go home."

"Dying?"

"Yep." He nodded and went down the street to telegraph to the old man's friends. I entered the gaol and looked into the epileptic's cell.

It was a fine face, very like Longfellow's* in his old age, and the light of reason had returned to it. As the gaoler read to him words of consolation and hope, the old man's gnarled fingers clung to the hand of Aunt Milly. She also whispered to him of the glories to come. Though the old man was past speech, the anguished searching of his eyes, the trembling of his fingers, showed the fear which possessed him. But Uncle James's gentle voice comforted him; he pressed the ministering hand which held his, murmured "Adieu, Madame, adieu," and, as his friends the whip-poor-wills wailed to him through the night, gave a long-drawn, shuddering breath, and died.

The next morning his relatives drove down in a buggy. Now they were sorry, grieved for the old man, wanted him back again, after the manner of us all when we lose someone whom we have treated badly. They wished to bury him in his own village, have a "good funeral," and reflect credit on the family name by the gorgeousness of his obsequies. These would be in public when the old man had been taken home. As a matter of form, there must first be an inquest, a rude coffin hastily knocked together, the body prepared for the grave.

The Coroner, followed by a jury, came along in the afternoon to view the body. They all seemed to think that the occasion was a holiday and relieved the tedium of their labours by inspecting the gaol. The usual verdict was given and the Coroner formally intimated to the relatives that they were at liberty to take away the body.

* When Longfellow was buried, Emerson, whose memory had gone, attended the funeral. "I do not remember the name of the gentleman," he said, "but he had a very beautiful soul."

At dusk two or three buggies drew up before the little grass plot in front of the gaol. They came so silently that a humming-bird in the syringa bush disdained to be frightened away. Each man wore crêpe on his left arm; his whip also had a black bow. The largest buggy was backed slowly up against the gaol door and then one heard a shuffling of heavy feet, an occasional knock against the walls in turning corners. Someone held the door wide open and old B'tiste Leroux reverently bared his head. "See, M'sieu, see," he whispered. "He ees mak to come out of de gaol."

The fiery little ponies, instinctively knowing the solemn nature of their burden, paced slowly away through the night, leaving Uncle James with his head bowed in prayer. As the buggy rounded the Point, the night steamer flashed her light upon the winding road and, shaded by dense masses of cedars, the whole cortège was swallowed up in the mighty Bush.

Old Daoust, in his cottage by the shore, played a requiem on his ancient violin. Once more the whip-poor-wills mourned as the steamer fussed up to the wharf. "He ees mak to come out of de gaol," and Leroux replaced his cap. "He ees mak to come out of de gaol, M'sieu. Le bon Dieu tak heem in ees arms; He say, 'You come wit' Me, mon pauvre. You come wit' Me!'"

I awoke the next morning to find myself infamous. It appeared that I had not immediately returned all my calls, and that such a proceeding indicated "British swank." It was only by going round and informing everybody that the visit I now made had been saved up as a *bon bouche* that I was able to retrieve the shreds of my reputation. "God havin' visited you, so to speak, with a craze for writin' things," said my friend the Oldest Inhabitant, "'tain't, in a way, fair to judge you same sif you was all right; but don't you do it agin."

I must have been a kind of stormy petrel, for the halcyon weather suddenly changed to incessant rain. The roads became impassable, even though I donned a pair of overshoes (goloshes) to tramp round the village. One was left

in a mudhole, and a cow ate it—all but the heel. She came into the village with it hanging from the left-hand side of her mouth, and the effect was rakish. Her owner complained that he tasted that golosh in the milk for days afterwards. And the rain rained on.

The next afternoon the Judge called to see me. He was a man of infinite humour, great learning, and keen observation. His black eyes sparkled beneath the shelter of shaggy brows, and his immense mop of hair formed a kind of natural wig. "My girls are getting up a reception in your honour. They've sent out messengers to Hawkesville and Piketown, Grentham and Gregor Hill, and you'll have to do your best to live up to it. If you came here for quiet, you won't get it. Folk remember you as a boy, and they want to see you again. I dare say you may have noticed that once we Canadians take hold of anyone, we don't let go again unless he deserves it. I'm told you sometimes rather burlesque us in stories; but then I know that underlying the burlesque is a love for us and Canada which has clung to you since your boyhood. But come down at nine to-night." His voice sank in a whisper. "And make yourself as impressive as possible."

"W-why?"

"You'll have to stand beside my wife and shake hands with everybody. If you don't remember their names, shake hands just the same and look as if you did, or they'll be disappointed. Shaking hands goes a long way with warm-hearted people like ours. We're sending a big double waggon round to collect the folk in the village, so that they can't make any excuses about the weather." He chuckled and departed.

Thinking that a dinner-jacket with silk facings would appeal to the multitude, I put on that gorgeous garment and a new pair of dancing pumps. The Highland Mary who waited on us at supper could not restrain her admiration. When the double waggon drove up, she even wanted to carry me out lest I should dim the glory of my pumps. Before I could protest, she hoisted me into the dark

228 More Memoirs—and Some Travels

waggon filled with people. "I—I hope I don't intrude?" I gasped.

"Come right in and sit just where you like," rippled a girlish voice.

"But there's no room."

A laughing voice breathed in my ear. "Don't be shy, Mr. Burgin. Perhaps you'd better take my place."

"But where are you to sit? I couldn't do such a thing."

The next moment I was gently yet firmly pressed into the vacant place. "It really seems as if I should have to sit in your lap," gurgled the Fair Unknown; and she did.

When we got into a mudhole, she went flying over to the other side of the wagon. But she returned. "Why didn't you hold me?" she asked. "Have you forgotten your early Canadian experiences? Better put your arm round my waist."

We jolted and bumped and held on to one another through the inky darkness as the rain swish-swished on the top of the waggon, and we hit against roadside logs or sank into mudholes until the heavy breathing of the horses showed that they had had enough of it.

Just before we drove up to the Judge's, the girl slipped off my knee and refused to disclose her identity. "I will leave you all the pleasures of illusion," she whispered. The people in the waggon made me get out first, and I was rushed into the hall by the hospitable Judge before I could recognise any of them. I wanted to see the girl who could talk about "all the pleasures of illusion," and was disappointed.

"Lost your coat-tails in the waggon?" asked the Judge as I took my place beside "Mary," who wore a Parisian dress and looked twenty-five, although I knew she was over forty. She had all the pleasant ease and kindness of an English "great lady," and took up the past as if she had seen me only yesterday.

My hostess presented me to everyone, and I began to wonder how all the little girls I had once known had become the beautiful mothers of equally beautiful young

daughters. Gentle Reader, should you be single, take passage to Canada and marry a Canadian girl. If you have been married two or three times, and Providence has once more made you a widower, just, by way of variety, wed a Canadian girl. Pure-eyed, divinely tall, graceful as a goddess, with a candid regard which takes you in at one comprehensive glance; capable, accomplished, able to cook a turkey or play a sonata; a brave and fearless daughter of the open air; her wit as keen as the edge of a Damascus blade; intensely humorous; she is a being to be worshipped, respected, admired, loved, cherished. Marry a Canadian girl, Gentle Reader, and, whatever else may happen to you, you will never have a dull moment after she has taken you into her big heart.

We began with "progressive whist," progressed to the supper tables, and then danced until four in the morning. Fortunately the heavy rain discouraged the mosquitoes, so that we were able to sit out dances on the verandah. I noticed that one young couple went out seven times to look for a robin's nest in the vines which clustered all over it. Nothing daunted them, not even the darkness.

When it was time to go home, the double waggon had already taken up its load of occupants. The kindly Judge hoisted me in and told the others to "be good to me." A guiding hand was stretched out in the darkness, and the "illusion" voice asked me to be seated "in the usual way."

"But am I not again encroaching on your good nature?"

"It is Canadian etiquette to return with the same person and in the same place."

For the first time in my life I blessed etiquette. "Would you mind telling me who you are? I have been looking for you all the evening."

"The ideal love," said the laughing voice, quoting from my latest atrocity in book form—"The ideal love is the love which shrouds itself in mystery, which gives nothing tangible, seeks nothing real, but glorifies life with

dreams of the might-have-been rather than debases it with the perpetual iteration of things-as-they-are.' And so, for this morning, at least, we will endeavour to live up to, or down to—whichever you prefer—your theory."

It was very gratifying to a novelist to be quoted in that way—most gratifying; but she might have revealed her identity. I do not know it to this day. She has her reward, however, for she dwells in my memory as one of the few women who can keep a secret.

CHAPTER II.

LOOKING ROUND FOUR CORNERS AGAIN

BUT for the wooden houses of Four Corners, you might almost imagine yourself in Brittany. Here are the same simple, solid Noah's Ark buildings of stone in close proximity to the farmyard. But there the resemblance ceases. The stone houses give way to wooden dwellings of all the colours of the rainbow; there is always a verandah gay with geraniums and oleanders in tubs. The church and many of the houses are roofed with shining tin. In the moonlight these roofs become the sharply swelling waves of a silver sea. Below the river bank the waters lap against the wooden piers, where the wharf, as it is called, stretches out for half-a-mile into the bay. Candour formerly compelled Four Cornerites to admit, when showing this venerable ruin to strangers, that it wasn't much of a wharf, whatever it might have been in the past. Scoffing travellers from Ottawa and Toronto affected to believe that the long line of half-sunken timbers, with the crazy old cabin at the end of it, was a prehistoric fragment on which the lofty mountains opposite looked down with ill-concealed contempt long before the little village of Four Corners throve upon the Red Man's camp, and its inhabitants had treated the former proprietors with contumely. Later on the real reason for the dejected condition of the wharf was pointed out by "Old Man" Evans to enquiring travellers. The wharf, as originally constructed, was a long, low wooden structure. It had been built on huge, wooden piles, each pile the lower portion of a stately pine. In the beginning

of winter, when the ice jammed in the bay, it swept against the wharf with Titanic force and usually ended by breaking away the little cabin at the end, where the wharfinger sat in state. Indeed, that scarred and experienced veteran had once been carried down to the very verge of the Long Sault Falls, cabin and all, and rescued from certain death by the skin of his jagged teeth. Consequently, although many Four Cornerites felt that it was cowardly on his part to desert the post of danger, the wharfinger eloquently pointed out that no one could afford to lose a wharfinger of his qualifications, and that, as a duty to his wife and family, it behoved him to come into Four Corners for the winter. Unconvinced by this specious reasoning, the little habitants took advantage of his retirement to set fire to the cabin, and its charred remains fell into the water and disappeared.

Next spring the precarious state of the wharf preyed upon Old Man Evans' mind to such an extent that he put on the black coat of an Elder and started for Ottawa to interview various political powers. During the winter he had drawn up numberless petitions setting forth the dangerous condition of the wharf, its absolute utility for the proper development of Four Corners, and the pressing need for its reconstruction at the Government's expense. Old Man's petitions were couched in such vigorous terms, his local influence was so great, that, wearied by his ceaseless importunities, the Government at length gave in and granted an appropriation for the reconstruction of the wharf.

It was also Old Man Evans who for ever endeared himself to his fellow-citizens by stating that here was an opportunity to make a little money out of a paternal Government, and, at the same time, clear their farms from the monumental masses of stone, the rugged boulders which weighed tons, and the huge stone fences disfiguring the lots. The Government needed thousands of tons of stone wherewith to fill in the first half of the wharf in order to enable the structure to withstand the impact of the drifting ice. This meant that Four Cornerites could charge so much a load for what had hitherto been an encumbrance; that they could

also charge for delivering the stone at the wharf; and, in short, live at Governmental expense for the next six months. It is needless to say that Old Man's statesmanlike proposal was received with the greatest enthusiasm, and that he was given a public banquet which exhausted a good deal of ready money. Farms were cleared of disfiguring boulders, from morn to dewy eve the loud explosion of dynamite cartridges was heard in the land, and the wharf rapidly rebuilt on such solid foundations that it promised to endure almost as long as the opposite mountains.

Having thus called the new wharf into being, Old Man felt that, in a measure, it belonged to him, and, in order to receive his friends' congratulations, seldom missed a favourable opportunity for parading it from end to end. It rather annoyed him, however, to see bicycles running up and down its sacred length; but, as the new flooring was admirably adapted to these eccentric machines, and an occasional rider, under the impression that a bicycle required the same treatment as a jibbing horse, went flying over the low railings into the river, Old Man's evenings were not wholly devoid of interest. He could swim like a fish, and it gradually came to be looked upon as his prerogative to dive after the victims of their own rashness. A stranger witnessing one of these accidents might have thought the behaviour of Four Cornerites rather callous, for until it had been definitely ascertained that Old Man was not on the wharf, no one lifted a finger to rescue the drowning cyclist, even though he sank for the second or third time. As for the bicycle, someone went out in a boat and fished for it with an iron hook attached to a long rope. The spokes of the bicycle suffered a little by this method of hauling it to the surface. Still, as Old Man justly pointed out, you can never expect complete happiness in this world, whatever may be your portion in the next.

But it was the young lovers who scored more than anyone else by Old Man's rejuvenation of the wharf. The quaint recess at the back of the little cabin became a favourite place for popping the question; and the river was handy for the rejected swain should he take his refusal too

much to heart. "Talking Age" had an appropriate recess on the other side of the wharf, where it could smoke and swap fishing stories.

Surrounded by admiring listeners, Old Man fought his battles with the Government over again. "We'll go slow a bit for awhile, boys," he would remark, expectorating into the Ottawa's brown flood. "We'll go slow a bit for the present; but I shouldn't be surprised if I was to tackle the Government for a Town Hall next year. Those jays at Hawklesville has got one; and it don't seem kinder right as we shouldn't live up to our wharf."

The village itself stands upon the Ottawa bank. Its main street consists of a few "stores" and the post-office, and runs parallel with the river. A second street a hundred yards back contains the Court House, the Catholic church, and the Registrar's office. Beyond this street are fertile fields green with the waving tassels of the Indian corn. Beyond the fields stretches the vast, illimitable Bush, with its serried ranks of pines and cedars. "Corn" means in Canada Indian corn, and corn in the cob is one of the most delicious and succulent vegetables in the world, although the Remittance Man, on first hearing of its virtues, explained that "In England we give corn to the cob and don't put it in him. He does that himself, doncher-know!" Perhaps the best idea of what "corn" really is may be conveyed by the Irishman who said: "Mother of Moses, shure it's the first time I've ever seen sphlit peas growing on a sthick."

"Bagosh, you mak to come back, hey, M'sieu Bourregan?" asks Père Nicholas, taking his corncob pipe from his mouth and expectorating at an innocent potato-bug on the sidewalk. "You mak to come back. Dat ees so, M'sieu, always. Always le bon Dieu breeng you back to de reever an' de mountains. I am old man, me; an' eet ees always de sam. Pipples mak to go to New York. Jean Baptiste Troudeau 'e come back an' 'e call 'eemself 'John B. Waterhole'; but in very little time the Curé say to 'eem: 'Eef Jean Baptiste Troudeau ees not good enuff for you, go back to de States. We don't want you.'"

It is Sunday morning. Hence Père Nicholas's unwonted ease. He has been to early Mass with the women, whose gay dresses, as they come up the wooden sidewalk, convert it into a flower bed. Give a habitant girl a few yards of muslin and ribbons, and she dresses with the taste of a Parisienne. From sixteen to twenty she is gloriously beautiful. After that she goes off very quickly. Mere boys and girls marry, and families of fifteen or twenty are not uncommon. The women work very hard, mature early, die comparatively young. There is plenty of food for all. In summer the little brown *bébés* run about almost naked; in winter they wrap themselves up in blanket coats and toboggan and eat and sleep, and long for the summer when they can "go in swimmin'." Curiously enough, the men have not the same taste in dress as the women. As they stand outside the church smoking a final pipe, their black cloth seems out of place. They are at their best in habitant winter garb of red sash, thick fur coats, fur caps, and heavy mitts. And although they are as tough as whipcord and very strong, they are not, as a rule, big men. They work hard, play hard, contrive as each son grows up to give him a farm, and in certain districts of Canada increase enormously. Fifty years ago in this particular village the inhabitants were mostly Scotch and English. Dense Bush grew right up to their doors. Now the Scotch and English and the Bush have almost disappeared, for the frugal habitants have cut down a good deal of the one and driven out the others.

The Curé sits on the verandah of his pleasant house, sunning himself after the morning's pious labours. "Yellow birds" build in the lilac by the porch, and the first humming birds have arrived from the South. An oriole sings from a lofty elm as the imported English sparrow, bolder, more pugnacious, more impudent even than in his own land, drives away the timid Canadian robin, which is really a kind of thrush. All around one, everything grows by inches. No wonder that Canadians resent the implication that theirs is a land of eternal snow. In the summer it is semi-tropical, but in the winter . . .!

In the winter you shall not know this once smiling little village for the same place. "Proclaimed by all the trumpets of the sky," the first snow falls in heavy masses. Double windows and doors are put in. Chickens and bullocks are slaughtered and left out overnight to freeze. When food is wanted, the frozen mass is brought up from the cellar and hung in the kitchen to thaw. Sleighs are overhauled, and last winter's coonskin coat taken from the tin box where even moths cannot enter. In the Bush the hearts of the great trees crack with the cold. At night filmy laces of the *Aurora Borealis* flit across the sky and the stars burn frostily. The track over the Ottawa river is marked out with cedar boughs. Woe betide the man who falls through a hole in the ice, for his body is never seen again.

When the snow ceases the sun comes out. This clear, bright, dry, bracing atmosphere fills everyone with energy. Snow roads are the best in the world. I can remember the delight of driving a sleigh for the first time. A temporary thaw had set in and made great holes across the road, holes which are technically known as cahots. I thought my pony a spiritless animal to pull up and take the cahots sideways. So I took them flying. The bottom of the sleigh bumped out, the pony refused to stop, and I had to run with him until he got into a snowdrift. My second drive was equally adventurous. I took out an elderly woman friend who was rash enough to entrust herself to my care; we hit against the stump of a tree, and her false teeth went flying into the snow. She found them again, but excused herself from any further expeditions on the ground that my driving "was too fanciful."

I told this to the minister's wife some time later, when the snow had gone. She believed in my driving and wanted me to take her to Hawklesville to pay a call. She had a new pair of gloves, and for the first mile laboriously tried to squeeze them on. Then she dropped one. "Stop and pick it up!" she cried, and, forgetting that buggy wheels are all the same size, I pulled the buggy hastily round.

When "diplomatic relations" were resumed, my head was about six inches from a huge boulder, and one eye rapidly closing. On seeing my plight, the minister's wife arose from the dust, lifted my head on her lap and wept.

I had never before had my head on the lap of a minister's wife; I staggered up, caught the horse, and we started afresh. It was arranged that I should sit in the shadow of the blinds at our house of call, and hold my handkerchief over my eye. Somehow, the next time I drove a buggy, half of Four Corners turned out "to see the *fun!*"

From the first day of her coming to Four Corners, Mrs. Mackonochie, the Presbyterian minister's wife, was a brilliant social and industrial success, in spite of having to do everything for her four little apostles—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Mr. Mackonochie was of a somewhat dreamy temperament, read a great deal, thought more, and was interested in "electrical science." My first introduction to him was occasioned by his inviting me, in the pride of his heart, to see some fearsome electrical comb which he had invented. The apostles—they were lovely children—came up with us to his study to look at the comb. Its main feature was a piece of wood with steel spikes driven through it, points upward. The apostles, in their little grey flannel nightgowns, at last kissed us with all the engaging affection of childhood, and the minister put his comb—points upwards—on the floor. Matthew stepped back suddenly and sat down on the spikes.

You could have heard the juvenile apostle yell for miles. Mrs. Mackonochie rushed in, caught up Matthew and bore him away.

"You see," said the minister absently, "I take this comb, apply a piece of silk, and generate a current."

But the current refused to generate. "I see there's something wrong," said the puzzled minister. "Why, it's *damp!*"

It was "damp"—with the blood of his offspring.

Mr. Mackonochie never took kindly to the hardships of Canadian life. He was always harnessing his pony with

the collar the wrong way up and with one trace longer than the other. He hated grooming it, and one morning curry-combed the cow without discovering his mistake. After he had once tried milking her, he refused to do it again until the cow apologised, for she had suddenly planted one hoof in his waistcoat and indignantly returned to her former owner. What he had done to her nobody knew, but Mr. Mackonochie would not say, and the cow could not.

One night the *Four Corners Gazette* office caught (?) fire. Mr. Mackonochie was sitting up late and saw the blazing roof. He seized a huge ladder and dragged it to the place unaided. Then he got buckets of water and poured them over himself and the roof—mostly over himself—until he extinguished the flames. The water got into his shoes and chilled him through and through, and he was confined to his bed for a month.

“ I *was* looking forward to that insurance money to carry me through the next six months,” sadly mused Colonel Draper as he sat down to pen paragraphs eulogistic of Mr. Mackonochie’s efforts to extinguish the flames. “ Looking forward to it as a dead cert. Some people, ’specially ministers, are always interfering with a providential thing like a fire ! ”

One day Colonel Draper expressed his surprise that I had not yet “ gone in swimmin’,” so, to oblige him and give him food for a paragraph, I consented to “ go in swimmin’.”

Imagine a blazing hot June day—a day that the average Canadian calls “ fine growin’ weather,” but which generally inflicts sunstroke on the untutored Englishman who wanders into the Ottawa river—that river which is now, alas! forsaken by the noble Red man and his copper-coloured squaw.

The word “ Ottawa ” is Indian, and pronounced with the accent on the second syllable, “ Ot-taw-wagh.” The French Canadians spell it “ Outaouais.” It means “ the human ear.” At one time there lived on the Ottawa’s banks a branch of the Algonquins, who called themselves “ Otta-

was," and waged continual war with the "Five Nations," known by the French settlers under the generic term of "Iroquois." After many a sanguinary combat, the Ottawas were driven away to the borders of Lake Huron.

At rare intervals may still be met a dark-hued individual, clad in the subfusk garb of civilisation; but he sings hymns, always out of tune, has never scalped anyone, dissembles his fondness for whisky, and is generally "on the cadge." The historic camping grounds of the fierce Iroquois are now the sites of peaceful little villages and huge saw-mills. Where Chingachgook once wandered in search of scalps, the potato-bug now seeks his tuberous prey. But to return to my "dip."

A solitary little brown cow strays along the village street, openly defying the municipal regulation which forbids her doing anything of the kind, puts her head in the post-office window, and wanders down to the river shore. Four Cornerites indulge in a siesta. Most of them have been up since daybreak. Now they are resting. I follow the little brown cow, she in all the bravery of her sleek summer coat, I in tennis flannels open at the throat, and shod with deer-skin moccasins.

The cow roams down a narrow lane leading to the Ottawa shore and makes straight for a mighty willow, where she stands knee-deep in the pleasant flood, only to be followed by swarms of insects which cluster round her eyes and over her sleek body. I brush them away with my white green-lined umbrella, and move lower down.

The flies give no peace under the trees. But there is a noble boulder two hundred yards out, and the water is quite warm. Surely if I disrobe in the shadow of the trees and bolt for the boulder before the mosquitoes "git me," I shall do well. No sooner thought of than done. The river bottom is a mingling of soft sand and sawdust, so, keeping on my moccasins lest I should tread upon a sharp stone, I gain the boulder, stick the open umbrella in a cleft, and lower myself into the water until only my head is visible. It is easy to scoop away the sand and make a comfortable hollow in which to sit; the stone affords a

pleasant support for my back. Oh-h, the blissful lapping of water against one's skin, the pine-scented air, the drowsy whirr of distant mills, the shadows of passing clouds upon the amber flood, the all-pervading peace! It is Nirvana, absolute negation, the meditating on the Higher Way. "We be all souls seeking the way. We—be—all—souls—seek——"

My chin sinks into the water, and the Seeker after Merit wakes and splutters. The hiss of an angry snake disturbs my ear; but it is only the little ferry boat crossing to Four Corners. I can hear its passengers talking: "So the minister's wife, not calc'latin' to live for the rest of her life on buns brought her by S'prise Parties, stuck a bun on each palin' of the Manse, and when folks came to church on Sunday they was consid'rably upset and——" The rest fades away in the distance. Why did the minister's wife impale the buns on the palings?

A sharp scream from the funnel of the largest saw-mill signals the hands to return to work. During the season there is a day and a night gang. The logs are floated down from tributary streams and kept in booms ready to be devoured by the saws. Agile men run about on the logs hauling them into their places. Sometimes a man slips, the logs close over him, and he does not come up again. There is, too, a superstition about moving the body of a drowned man until it has been viewed by the Coroner. I remember one evening getting off the cars and making my way through the pine-scented dusk to the water's edge in order to take the ferry. As we passed out of the little creek, I saw a curiously shaped tree floating in the water. It was tied to a raft by a cord. "They don't seem to have taken the bark off," I said to a fellow-passenger. "What a queer-looking tree!" Then the moon came out and shone down on the face of a drowned man staring heavenward with sightless eyes.

The drowsy moments pass, the warm waters lave body and soul, clear away the cobwebs of cities, purify one's spirit, sing a soothing song of the littleness of earth and of earth's ambitions. A raft floats by with a hut on it,

and one of the raftsmen, idly sitting upon a squared log, sings the song of Pelang:—

Pelang, Pelang, mon cher garçon,
I t'ink of you—t'ink of you night an' day—
Don't mak no difference, seems to me,
De long, long tam you're gone away.

A sudden breeze sweeps over the surface of the water, the slow, lazy-gliding current quickens a little, the blue of the sky changes to copper, gusts of wind rush down the gorges, trees tremble on the shore. Splash! Splash! Splash! Raindrops dance upon the boulder and trickle down into the river. It is a summer storm—a world of angry waters—of icy floods—of—of——! Whew-w-w! A rush for the shore, a hasty plunge into flannels as the rain drips through the trees, and the storm is over.

There went down into the river a meditative, heavy-footed, more than middle-aged man; there comes up from the river a spring youth, striding the narrow way with eager footsteps and singing a gladsome song to the reappearing patch of blue as the clouds roll by. The nearest habitant is eating a savoury stew, from which arises an odour sweeter than all the scents of Araby. At a sign from the hospitable little brown man, I join him, take a wooden spoon, plunge it into the smoking pot and eat my fill. Oh! ye purblind worms who writhe in cities, ye pot-hatted, frock-coated, shiny-booted sons of Commerce, fling off the garb of slavery—quit soul-destroying toil—throw aside the cares of earth—wash in the waters of the Outaouais—wash and be clean!

CHAPTER III.

CROSSING THE BRIDGE

WE sat round the Store "swappin' yarns" with the Storekeeper, who had recently been elected sheriff after a blood-curdling contest and was thus compelled to keep in touch with his supporters lest the French-Canadian element should come in and swamp all chances of reaping adequate emolument from his office. It was well known that the obstreperous Laviolette from Quebec had been looking about promising his own party everything they wanted if they elected him at the next general election as member for the County. But the Storekeeper that very afternoon arrested Laviolette for being "mad drunk" and using threatening language. Most of us had just returned from witnessing the exhilarating spectacle of seeing the great Laviolette fined ten dollars by a local magistrate.

"If he hadn't gone and got on a jag," mused the Storekeeper, "there's no tellin' all the harm he might have done in a peaceful and law-abidin' constituency like Four Corners. Now, breakin' stones, if he can't plank down the ten dollars, 'ill take the mischief out of him, and he'll leave gaol a healthier and a wiser man. It's a sort of warnin' to folks never to drink unless they can do so in moderation 'ithout disturbin' the public peace."

"Jesso," said Pete Marston. "Jesso, Sheriff. D'you remember what happened to Fergusson Small when he tried to cross the new bridge with a bottle of whisky in his pocket? That scared off most of the young fellers from drink, and we had a thund'rin' temp'rance revival arterwards."

“Wal, no,” said the Sheriff, “I disremember ’zactly the time it was when folks got worried to join the temp’rance cause. ’Fore what happened to Fergusson Small, we didn’t take much stock in water round here. Seemed sorter unkind to La Vie’s whisky to mix it up in such onnat’ral matrimony, so to speak; and, besides, when the Baptists took to breakin’ holes in the Ottawa to baptise folk one winter, it kind of broke up the Baptist community, and made the rest of us weaken on water in any shape arter old Deacon Jenkins was doused in the river with only a night-shirt on, and the minister let him slip under the ice, and he didn’t turn up till the spring. No, sir, the Baptists had to clear out or give up their way of welcomin’ folk to the fold; and they all of ’em cleared out ’ceptin’ Mamie Roberts and her old dad. That’s how the trouble began between Fergusson Small and Peter Snell.

“Mamie Roberts was a monstrous pretty girl, and Fergusson Small and Peter Snell got to fightin’ about her. At first Mamie only laughed and went sleigh-drivin’ with both of ’em, or took their presents and made out she didn’t know her own mind, which, she bein’ a woman, was likely enuff. But the shame of it was that Fergusson Small was mighty rich and spent money right and left, but couldn’t help gittin’ drunk as an Injun every night. Peter warn’t no slouch either, and could take his liquor like a little man; but t’other feller’d git drunk d’rectly.

“Every time one of ’em took Mamie out drivin’, the other ’ud wait for him round the corner when he went to put up his ponies, and the set to atween ’em was only wound up by Constable White readin’ the Riot Act from his window and threat’nin’ to jail ’em both if they didn’t go home peaceably. Just about that time, too, the contractors started to build the new bridge over the mouth of the Rouge River. You know what a thund’rin’ wide bridge it is now, and how the drivers allers slows up afore they cross it.

“Wal, one fine day (’twas Indian summer time, when you can’t hear the leastest, tiniest sound in the Bush, and everything seems just waitin’ to bid good-bye to old

friends) folk was mighty s'prised to see Fergusson Small and Peter Snell go out gunnin' together. Old Roberts was livin' close to the Crick, and neither he nor Mamie saw Peter go into La Vie's and bring out a bottle of whisky, which Fergusson shoved into his breast pocket inside his shootin' coat, and started off, half fuddled, with Peter doin' all the rowin', as if he wanted to work off the thoughts in his black heart. Folks saw 'em reach t'other side, and then I seed 'em arterwards from where I was sittin' at the river mouth just underneath the trestle-work of the bridge, sixty feet above me. The way of the bridge hadn't been laid down permanently, but long timbers ran from one arch to the other, with, here and there, a cross-timber to hold 'em together. Between each cross-timber and the next was a space of about four feet, though it didn't look so big from where I was sittin' makin' believe to catch pickerel, but not gittin' any. Most of the rocks had jagged, sharp-pointed edges, and wasn't pretty to look at, bein' slippery as well; but there was two big flat rocks only half-covered with water and separated by about a yard. Presently I heard shots gittin' nearer and nearer, and one struck the buttress of the bridge close to me. I made up my mind 'twas time to move, or those two durned fools 'ud shoot me. But just then I got a bite, and I was so s'prised I didn't know what to do. Fifteen years, man and boy, I'd fished there 'ithout gittin' a fish. The wonder of it 'most took away my breath. When I landed that fish, it nearly knocked me out of time.

"I looked up at the bridge again presently and could see Fergusson and Peter comin' out of the woods by t'other side, each stoppin' to take a swig from the whisky bottle, which Fergusson put back into that inside pocket. As far as I could make out, Peter was darin' him to walk across the unfinished bridge. I dessay most of you gentlemen know how it is when one leg starts north and the other south, and your left side leans over nor'-west, and your head tries to waggle to the south-east. Fergusson was pretty far gone, but there was no earthly chance of my gittin' up there in time to stop him. All I could do was to

keep quiet so's not to startle him, whiles that skunk of a Peter looked on with a grin.

"Fergusson still held his gun in his hand. Suddenly Peter let off his own gun, and Fergusson, thinkin' he was shot, stumbled and dropped through the bridge on to the rocks below. I couldn't help givin' a yell, for I knew Mamie loved him and didn't care a red cent for Peter. Presently I heard a groan where Fergusson had dropped, and hurried over to look arter his remains. Would you b'lieve it, gentlemen, that chap had fallen atween the two flat rocks with his gun outstretched, and that had broken his fall—and the gun, too. He was bleedin' badly from a broken head and had smashed a rib when I got to him. As I lifted his head out tumbled *the whisky bottle from his pocket safe and sound*. You may break a man's heart, but it takes a lot to smash his whisky bottle."

"Did he die?" I asked.

"No, sir, you bet he didn't die. Trifles like that don't kill Canadians. Some fellers as were hard by carried him to my boat and laid him down slam-jam on top of my pickerel. When I arterwards heaved Fergusson off the remains of that fish, it looked as thin as if it had been fed in a boardin' house. But he was allers a gentleman, was Fergusson. When the others helped me to lift him into my boat he says: 'Kindly thank these gentlemen for their trouble and give 'em a dollar each.' That was his way; and they felt sif he'd given 'em the money.

"Then he fainted again as we rowed him over, and I went on ahead to break the news to Mamie. I was that fluster'd I forgot to knock, and walked right into the house.

"'He's dead,' says she, jumpin' up and turnin' white.

"'It's a lie,' says I gently, not wishin' to fluster her; but she rushed out of the house, helped to carry Fergusson in, and laid him on her own bed, and when Peter pretended it was all an accident turned on him like a wild cat.

"'You coward! Oh, you coward!' she said, her eyes blazin' at him. 'Oh, you skulkin' coward. I love him! I love him! If he dies, his blood will be on your head.'

246 More Memoirs—and Some Travels

“ But it wasn't, for Fergusson got well and married her, and Peter Snell, arter goin' on a fortnight's jamboree, joined the Salvation Army. He nearly lost his life in Quebec last Fall 'cause the habitants there said a man as could go about temptin' Providence by dressin' up as he did, and wouldn't hit back when they heaved rocks at him, deserved to die.”

And the Storekeeper stared gloomily at a depressed-looking pickerel in a glass case over the door of the Store.

CHAPTER IV.

AMONG THE HABITANTS

“**E**XCUSE to me, M’sieu,” said the old habitant as I strolled along the river bank and stopped opposite his picturesque-looking little wooden house, with its “morning-glory”-covered verandah and tribe of bare-legged and one-garmented children sprawling on the grass. “Excuse to me, M’sieu, but if M’sieu would geeve himself de pain to mak de picter of les cochons—M’sieu le père cochon has permeet heemself to grow vair old—I will pray for M’sieu’s soul to le bon Dieu.”

So I sat on a fallen log and photographed not only the most ancient of swine but a brown-skinned baby as well, and a group of fifteen other children who crept out from the corners of the verandah. They were all brown-legged, bare-footed, black-eyed, swarthy-complexioned, the boys wearing cut-down pants fastened by one suspender, and the girls clad in a nondescript kind of garment open at the throat and flowing loosely to the knees. They were riotously healthy and happy, and on the most friendly terms with les cochons, with the exception of the old boar, whose neck was confined in a “poke” to prevent him from getting through the fence.

I photographed a young mother and her baby. “Your daughter-in-law and grandchild?” I asked the old man as he filled his corn-cob with a mixture of willow leaves and tobacco, and struck a match on his pants in that masterly way of which Canadians alone possess the secret.

The old man looked annoyed. “Ah, non, M’sieu; eet ees ma femme an’ de leetlest bête.”

248 More Memoirs—and Some Travels

“What! How old are you?”

“Seventy-tree, M’sieu. Seventy-tree. I hav mak marié one, two, tree tam.”

“Well, but”—I was treading on delicate ground—
“how many children have you?”

The old man puffed at his corncob and thought hard.
“Seventeen, M’sieu. Ah, non. De leetle Baptiste, ’e ees one more. ’E ees so small, I forget ’eem. M’sieu Goriot, down de road, ’e have twenty-seven.”

In due time I made the acquaintance of all the little Goriots (some of them were bearded men), was presented to the fourth Madame Goriot, a charming brunette of twenty, and soon became a frequent visitor at the pretty farmhouse. Toward evening the fiddles were brought out, and the Goriots sang and danced to the music of Old France. Then Pierre, the owner of the pigs, would drop in for a chat and struggle with an English cigar, though he did not like it but was too polite to say so.

“Why are the cattle making such a noise?” I asked him one evening as the stars began to twinkle and the moonlight flooded the tin roof. “Anything wrong with them?”

Old Pierre laughed as the distant boom-boom sounded from a neighbouring marsh. “Eet ees de bull-frogs.”

“The what?”

“De bull-frogs, M’sieu. Grenouilles. You hear de leetle rossignol chant?”

I listened with my ear to the ground as thousands of trillings came up through the long grass. And yet they were not like the singing of birds.

“Dey are de leetle frogs. In de springtam eet ees always so. Dere was once a Doctor Smeet who mak to come here and not pay hees debts. Millette, de blacksmith, ’e get on one beeg dronk—vair beeg dronk. Doc. Smeet, ’e say to Millette, ‘W’at does de beeg bull-frog say to you, Millette?’ ’E say, “Don’t-get-dronk, don’t-get-dronk, Millette.”’ Millette, ’e straighten up heemself an’ ’e say to Doctor Smeet: ‘W’at de leetle frogs say to you, Doc. Smeet?’ “Pay your debts, Doc. Smeet. Pay your debts,

Doc. Smeet." ' Den Doc. Smeet, 'e go 'ome an' leave Millette to mak feenesh de spree, while de beeg frogs boom-boom an' de leetle frogs zip-zip."

This frog concert lasted for nearly three weeks. Every night I sat listening to it, although a myriad mosquitoes worked their will on me. The proper way to punish a mosquito is to let him suck his fill of blood, then gently brush him aside, and leave him to die of indigestion. These little pests have a curious knack of discovering strangers, and will always attack them in preference to feasting on a seasoned inhabitant. Canadians say that the blood of newcomers is sweeter and thicker than theirs, and that the mosquitoes know this. In summer time the habitants take out the doors of their houses and substitute light wire frames, the meshes of which are so small that no mosquito can get through. The poorer folk build little fires of green wood and sit over the smoke—a remedy which is almost worse than the mosquitoes.

Old Pierre loved to see the fireflies flitting in their thousands through the night air. He had a big fuchsia on the verandah just to please the humming-birds, and firmly believed that humming-birds had no feet because they were always tucked away under the soft plumage. Most of his neighbours were fond of flowers. At daybreak the big bell in the tin steeple called them to early Mass, and the church was thronged with devout worshippers. Very often the old men and women went to church in the afternoon. For the ceremony of their First Communion, the little girls, dressed all in white and wearing white veils, were escorted to the church by their relations and friends. The boys, however, generally attached a worldly meaning to their First Communion. "What does it mean?" I asked one small urchin as he emerged from the church, his hat cocked rakishly on one side. "It means, M'sieu, I am a man now and can go and see the girls."

The habitant is capable of deep attachments, although he generally marries two or three times. There is the pathetic story of the habitant girl whose lover had pro-

mised to visit her one evening, but was killed in a storm. "An' here," says the girl:—

An' here on de fête of de jour de l'an,
Alone by mese'f I sit again,
W'ile de beeg, beeg storm is blow outside,
An' de snow come sweesh on de window-pane.

The women work themselves out sooner than the men, who, as a rule, marry again very quickly. A girl, too, considers it a disgrace if she hasn't a beau to see her home from church. Her mistress one Sunday morning found the little habitant maid in tears. "What's the matter with you, Celestine?" "It's the first Sunday, Madame, since I was twelve I haven't had a young man to walk home with me," sobbed Celestine. "Think of the disgrace!" "But how about Jean Seguin?" "Oh, last night Jean came in to say he'd met a girl who owns a cow and a feather bed, and he wanted his presents back again. Don't be sorry for me, Madame. I'll get another beau and be married first just to spite him." Five minutes later she sallied forth in cherry-coloured ribbons to find a fresh beau, and brought him back in triumph to dinner.

The average Englishman cannot understand the cheerfulness of the Canadian winter, when the habitants go into the Bush to cut timber. All winter they fell the trees, and in spring raft the logs down to the mills. In spite of their great skill, accidents sometimes happen. A man slips between two logs, they close over him; the raft itself may break up, and half the crew be drowned in their efforts to save one another:—

* O, mon Dieu! for see dem two man, mak' me feel I cry lak woman,
Roun' an' roun' upon de eddy, quickly dem poor fellow go,
Can't tole one man from de oder, an' we'll know dem bote lak
broder,

But de fight she soon is finish—Paul an' 'Poleon go below.

The bodies are recovered and buried, and:—

You can't hear no church-bell ring dere, but de rossignol is sing dere,
An' w'ere ole red cross she's stannin', mebbe some good ange gardien,
Watch de place w'ere bote man sleepin', keep de reever grass from
creepin'

On de grave of 'Poleon Doré an' of poor Paul Desjardins.

* The late Dr. Drummond, the celebrated writer of habitant poems.

In the long winter nights the women and children sit round the glowing stove and tell stories of how, on New Year's Eve, departed voyageurs return to earth in their boats and revisit the old scenes. A boat flies through the air, and the old man who tells the story hears a weird song:—

But it mak me lonesome an' scare also, jus'sam I be goin' for die,
W'en I lissen dat song on night lak dis, so far away on de sky,
Don't know w'at to do at all mese'f, so I go w'ere I have good view,
An' up, up above t'roo de storm an' snow, she's comin wan beeg canoe.

But when the winter has fairly set in and there are no storms, and the Northern Lights shoot their filmy laces across the sky, the young folk forget their superstitious terrors and dance half through the night or "sit up" with each other, after returning from long sleigh-drives along snowy roads hedged in with ghostly cedar and pine. Though the habitant's life is sometimes a hard one, his wants are few; the more children he has, the greater the esteem in which he is held by his neighbours. And on fête-days he would not change places with a king.

CHAPTER V.

CATCHING THE CARS

THE Canadian Pacific Railway is on the opposite side of the river from Four Corners, and, in order that you may not miss the ten o'clock train for Ottawa, you breakfast at daybreak, although the distance by the ferry-boat is only three miles, followed by ten minutes' drive up to "The De-pôt." Still, what matter if you get there a few hours before the train is due? The day is young, the morning air a perfumed dream, the song of robin and oriole a delight, the shimmer of sunshine on the amber-hued Ottawa a feast to the eye. And it is not your good fortune to go in what the children call "a real, live train" every day.

And so you cross the river before you get to the depôt; in other words, the Calumet Station of the C.P.R. Not far from it is the burial mound of an old Indian sachem, whose "calumet" still rests within his nerveless hand. But at night the sachem's fleshless bones are clothed again, and, in all the majestic panoply of war-paint and feathers, he once more rides through the silent Bush, calling on his fellow-phantoms to arise from their graves and slay the White Man whose "Bad Medicine" destroyed him and them.

After you have reached the end of the wharf, and narrowly escaped breaking a leg through a hole in the planks, you arrive at the starting-place of *The Ottawa Belle*. This little paddle-wheel steamer is not to be hurried. Has she not to take her wood on board! Besides, the Captain's dignity must be considered. If he did not manœuvre his

vessel as though she were a Dreadnought, he would lose all prestige in the eyes of the crowd (three men, a small boy, and a pig in a crate) assembled to see him set forth on his perilous trip, for, look you, it is no light thing to work *The Ottawa Belle* safely over a sand bank. Sometimes the crew (he also smokes a farewell pipe as though he might never have the chance of enjoying another) has to turn up his pants, go overboard, and shove the boat off into deep water again. That is one of his many reasons for preferring whisky to water.

With the aid of much bad language, *The Ottawa Belle* is started for the opposite shore. There, she deposits her passengers by the side of an old tram drawn by a horse and a mule, the latter always on the look out for a mouthful of stray passenger.

"Think we'll make her in time?" asks a nervous old lady.

"She ain't due for three hours yet," says the withered horse and mule flagellator.

The expected "she" is not a female, but the Ottawa train. With much bad language from the driver, and much hauling and straining on the part of the horse and mule, the tram gets up to the depôt, and the little, lame Baggage Master hops out from a hole in the wall, seizes a trunk as big as himself, gives it one deft twist, and spins it into a distant corner close to the weighing machine. Then, saying things unfit for ears polite, he rushes after it, weighs it, and puts it on a barrow, whilst its tearful owner protests he's "mushed up all the tomarter jam." "Great old man, ain't he?" says the champion loafer of the depôt, referring to the Baggage Master. "Never seen nothin' he couldn't handle when he'd give his mind to it."

The line lies at the very feet of the green Laurentian Mountains, whose summits are gay with maples. At the first touch of frost, the maples become flaming torches wherewith to light the world. Habitant "shacks" perch on the mountain side, and the Station Master's garden is gay with flowers. Little yellow birds, big blackbirds, and gorgeous orioles flit around.

Inside the refreshment-room the "Hash Slinger and Pie Dispenser" puts her wares in order, gives a coquettish twist to her "pneumonia blouse," and prepares for customers.

A bell tolls solemnly, and I expect to see a funeral procession rounding the curve as I reverently bare my head. "Put your hat on, or it'll be your own funeral from sun-stroke," says the habitual loafer. "It's only that darned old engine bell. Guess they've run over a cow, and she's mournin' for the departed. Here she comes. My, but ain't she a dandy!"

The earth trembles as the huge carriages come to a standstill, and the passengers pour into the refreshment-room for pie. Men with hammers play tunes on the carriage wheels, the engine driver gazes abstractedly at the mountain side—it would be a bold man who would dare to address him—and the "ticket puncher," alias conductor, affably converses with the Baggage Master, as the latter, assisted by a black nobleman in blue overalls, hands up huge trunks into the baggage waggon. "All aboard! All aboard!" cries the conductor. "And 'bout time, too," grumbles an old woman. "I've been five hours gittin' six miles, but *I've caught the cars!*"

As the train rumbles round a curve and disappears, the little lame Baggage Master sits down on a damaged trunk—and goes to sleep; a black and white spaniel lies in the middle of the track—and goes to sleep; the beauteous "Hash Slinger" puts a pinafore over her pneumonia blouse—and goes to sleep; the Telegraph Operator operates no more, but takes off his coat—and goes to sleep. Outside the depôt the sun blazes fiercely down. Ruminating cows stand knee deep in the river, and—

"Silence, like a poultice, comes to heal the blows of sound."

There will be another train in five hours' time. Why shouldn't I go to sleep too! Besides, now I come to think of it, I don't particularly want to go to Ottawa.

When I woke up again, I "rested" for the remainder of the day with the Oldest Inhabitant, and yielded to his

entreaties to spend the night at his shanty and "larn a little wisdom."

The next morning soft, west winds came up from the river to where we sat under a graceful rock elm. An oriole flashed across the road, a cat-bird hissed in the bushes, a beautiful snake basked in the road.

" ' And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, ' "

I quoted.

" Don't you do nothin' of the sort, " said the Oldest Inhabitant sternly. " The poor critter's only sunnin' itself same as wimmin does in their Sunday clothes. Come on and—"

" But I don't want—"

" Come on. Maybe if you goes to school agin—to say nothin' of gittin' a peep at our school marm in her best frock—you'll larn a little and give up thisyer foolishness of writin' books. 'Sides, the waste of time! You might be a-stayin' out here all day lookin' at things 'stead of foolin' with that little machine of yours as turns out print. Thar's too much print in the world. Come on down to the school house. Maybe you'd better put on that jacket of yours with the silk collar. The Committee'd take it as well meant, though it is a bit hot to-day."

" Good heav—"

" Don't you be profane " (the Oldest Inhabitant sat there in all the untrammelled freedom of shirt sleeves and, therefore, did not mind the heat), " but come along. When you see our school marm, you'll be thankful you've took my advice."

A crimson-headed woodpecker tapped at the hollow rails of the fences. There was a soft blue haze about the Laurentian summits. On the timber rafts were gaily-dressed women doing their cookery upon little piles of earth, and two or three brown children dangled their legs in the water. As the ferry boat tied up to the wharf, a crowd got out *en route* for the school house.

Half-a-dozen buggies were hitched outside the school house; on the steps stood a pail of fresh water with a tin

dipper inside; above the dipper, the Committee welcomed eager parents. Near the gate the melodious strains of children singing made a pleasant variety to the harsh swearing of an old grey parrot hung up in an apple tree. The parrot seemed to have a grievance because the tree was full of caterpillars and he was not. All the windows were open, and a fair-haired, handsome young school marm, with a "speller" in her hand, was giving out words to the girls and boys. The girls were beautifully dressed, the mistress herself a dream of tired loveliness in white piqué and blue ribbons. A lock of sunny hair hung over her forehead, her voice was going but, in spite of a yelling baby, she persevered. The Committee, now with spelling books, followed the contest, sternly suppressing parental pride, but at intervals looking humanly anxious. When a child failed to spell a word, another chance was given. Then the defeated one, with quivering lips and brimming eyes, walked back to her seat trying hard to look as if it did not matter. From the apple tree the parrot spelled back with unholy joy.

More parents arrived and cheered on their offspring to fresh efforts. One or two pretty girls drifted in, accompanied by shy young men with sleek hair and Sunday faces. Only one boy and one girl remained out of the whole class.

"Spell lettuce," said the tired teacher.

The small boy gasped, "L-e-t-t-i-s."

The little girl's hand shot out like a semaphore: "Lettuce"; and the battle was over.

As the tired school marm collapsed in a heap, "Lettis" shrieked the parrot. "Lettis—Lettis—Lettis."

When the prizes were being given, I was absently spelling the names cut deep in the wooden desks. Somebody's deep voice boomed out the usual platitudes, and the Oldest Inhabitant dug me in the ribs. "Git up," he said hoarsely. "Git up."

"What for?"

"You've got to speak a piece."

"Go to——!" I made a rush for the door. The Oldest Inhabitant's long arm held me. "You've got to do it."

I've been blowin' all over Four Corners 'bout you, and you've *got* to do it."

Though his voice was stern, the pathos in his gimlet eye would have melted a heart of stone.

The pretty, tired school marm looked at me with eager interest. "You are from the outer world," her eyes seemed to say. "Tell us about it."

The leading barrister of Four Corners, two ministers, four elders, and Constable White approached me, and, half-dead with terror, I followed them to the platform, whilst the parrot began to swear at me from the apple tree. The next moment I was alone upon the platform, looking aimlessly down at a sea of faces and wishing I had the parrot's copious vocabulary.

"Seems sorter stuck, don't he?" suggested one feminine voice. "Don't know enuff to begin," said another. "Or to come in when it rains," hazarded a third.

"Tell us about the great world, the great world," the school marm's beautiful eyes implored.

"Children," I began, quite ignoring their elders, "three thousand miles away there is a country called England. Once upon a time, when your great grandfathers and great grandmothers were little like you, they lived there. But they grew tired of bondage; they wanted to grow up men and women; to escape from the crowded cities, the ugly houses, the hard life in factories, the workhouse. When they grew up and had spent their lives working for others, they looked round in vain for a little rest, sunshine, happiness. But this beautiful country of England was overcrowded with people, ruled by ancient customs. If a man were born a servant, custom decided that he must remain one. He must touch his hat to those above him all his life, and be poor at the end of that life. Hence, your great grandfathers and great grandmothers said to themselves: 'Far off across the Atlantic is another beautiful country, so big, so fruitful, so hospitable, that if we go to it, build ourselves houses, till the soil, we shall live happy lives, have the wherewithal for our daily bread.' And so they came to Canada and conquered it by the

258 More Memoirs—and Some Travels

sweat of their brows. Where once the virgin forest covered the land, they made fertile corn fields; where the bear and the Indian roamed they built themselves homes, humble homes at first, but warm and sheltering. Their own homes! And God was with them and prospered them, made them happy men and women, able to look the whole world in the face. But in their prosperity, their happiness, they do not forget their birthright, their heritage. 'The Old Country' is theirs also; they are as much a part of it as the stranger who comes to you from afar. In their hearts still glows the love for kith and kin, which time cannot weaken, absence cannot break; which is part of their being. They are English still—English to the core—English in their traditions, their customs, their loyalty, their endurance, their courage. They brought all these qualities from one little island to the enrichment of this vast land. And as a child grown to manhood comes back to his mother, so you return to the land of your ancestors. In moments of trial and danger, you shed your blood for it; for you are the children of greater England—the England of the future—a future so glorious that imagination cannot picture it, words cannot paint it. Children, listen to the voice of the stranger within your gates. Always uphold the honour of this new land which is yours; always remember that behind the honour of Canada is the honour of the land which gave your ancestors birth; always remember that English rose and Canadian maple leaf are interchangeable emblems dear to us both, that your quarrel is ours, our quarrel is yours; that together we stand, together we fall."

"Bagosh, we will that!" cried the Oldest Inhabitant. "Three cheers for the Old Country."

And they gave them with a will, even the parrot joining in.

The schoolmistress shyly approached me. "England," she said softly. "England! Tell me of England. I am eating my heart out here. Tell—me—of—England!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE OLDEST INHABITANT

AFTER our adventures at the school house, I contracted a habit of strolling off to see the Oldest Inhabitant in order to accumulate a fund of wisdom to take back with me to England.

One night there was a wistful sadness in the moonlight as I wandered down the village road toward his shanty—a shanty set in an orchard a couple of hundred yards away from the river bank. Captivated by my charm of manner, the Oldest One was always doing his best to make me relinquish Civilisation, dwell with him beside the Ottawa shore, and learn how to “chaw”! When I thought of all the drawbacks of Fleet Street, I was half inclined to accept his offer; it was the learning to “chaw” which made me decline it.

The moonlight fell across the dusty road in white patches. Here and there a melancholy whip-poor-will voiced its lonely sorrow to the night. There was a slight breeze in the rock elms—just enough to wave their branches mournfully. The stars shone brightly in a sapphire, velvety sky. From the distance sounded the soft murmur of the Long Sault Falls. A dewy freshness sweetened the syringa-laden air. The cabins by the road-sides were filled with the music of rustic fiddles.

I strolled somewhat sadly on until I saw the light of the Oldest Inhabitant's pipe gleam through the apple trees. It looked like a giant firefly; then I saw by its fixedness that the Oldest Inhabitant was engaged in thought. When he gave himself up to reflection, it was necessary to

approach in respectful silence; so I sat down on a log opposite him, the peace of the moonlight gradually stealing into my manuscript-battered soul.

For some time the Oldest Inhabitant puffed in silence. Then he put down his pipe and remarked that the moonlight "made baccy taste good."

"Moonlight makes me sad," I said irritably. "It is a reproach—a constant reminder of all the things one has meant to do in the world and hasn't done."

"If you'd seen as much of it as I have, guess you wouldn't look at it that way. You're so darned restless, can't stay put, allers wantin' to do things in a hurry. What's the good? You can't live more'n one life and do a few things in it. If so be you don't do some of those things, nobody's a cent the worse."

"Oh, don't let's talk about it. If one has the curse of ambition, it keeps on worrying one all the time."

"See here," said the Oldest Inhabitant severely. "I don't take no stock in thisyer ambition racket you're allers thinkin' about. What's the good of it? It means as you're tryin' to cut a dash in the world when you'd be much happier out of it learnin' to chew. The only useful thing to know about the world's how to get out of it; and you don't know even that, 'cept when you trots over here for a few months and I eddicates you up to it."

"You take away the content I have in my 'job' and want me to experiment with Nature. Why can't you teach the moonlight to 'chaw' and leave me alone?"

He laid a brawny leg-of-mutton fist on my shoulder. "I'll tell you what's the matter with you. You've bin runnin' round to see folks, gittin' to dream of old things, beginnin' to think too much of us. You'll have to go back soon, and then you'll feel sorter unsettled and wish you hadn't. If you stop here, you'll wish you hadn't."

"Oh, bother; I'm going to bed."

"Better stop up a bit. What's the matter, anyway?"

"I don't know. It's this infernal moonlight."

"It's a darned good world. Maybe you'd like to see suthin in it as 'ill make you ashamed of yourself?"

“ Oh, I’m always ready to see anything and profit by its lesson.”

“ That’s a dum lie,” said the Oldest Inhabitant. “ You’re so chock full of the world and all that’s goin’ on in it and wantin’ to take your share in it, it never seems to run in your mind what lots of folk has done all theseyer things afore you was born, and made up their minds they weren’t worth doin’. Heaps of worldlings has gone into monastries jus’ to fix ’emselves straight for the next world.”

“ Oh, don’t let’s get back to mediæval superstitions.”

“ Don’t you talk to me of your muddy evil superstitions. I was meanin’ the Trappist monks of Oka.”

“ The Monks of Oka! That’s a good title for an article.”

“ Never you mind your blamed articles. You’ll be puttin’ *me* in a book some day if you ain’t dum careful. ’Sides, if the Angel Gabriel was to come along, you’d take notes of his wings. What I wants to drive into you is you’re allers in such a darned hurry. Guess I’ll take you to look at some folks as never hurries.”

“ I needn’t leave this shanty to find a man who never hurries,” I said cubbishly.

“ Now you’re nasty—dum nasty. Ever heard of theseyer monks? ”

“ Vaguely.”

“ ’Bout fifty years ago three of these monks—Trappists they called ’em because they didn’t know how to set traps—came to Canada, and the Government, jus’ to encourage ’em, gave ’em a sandy valley as warn’t no good to nobody.”

“ And did they settle? ”

“ They settled for all they was worth, and a good deal more. Built ’emselves a little shack the first year, and worried through the winter. Then they cut down wood and planted and sowed and reaped. That’s been goin’ on for fifty years, but they never hurried like you do. Now how do you think they’re gittin’ on? ”

“ Got a match? Thanks. Haven’t the slightest idea.”

“ S’pose we take a trip down to Oka to see. There’s one thing you’ll have to do when you git there.”

“ What’s that? ”

“ Hold your tongue. They don’t go much on conversation, ’cept the chap as receives you. He’s the only one of ’em as talks.”

“ But we can’t go without an invitation.”

“ Yes, we can; and they don’t charge nothin’ for it. You jus’ give ’em what you like when you’re comin’ away, and they don’t ask no questions.”

“ Why on earth do you like them so much? ”

“ ’Cause they’re sensible people. Don’t allow no wimmen on the premises, and do their own dustin’. Folks as strong-minded as that is bound to git on.”

“ Oh, all right. How do we get there? ”

“ We’ll go down by boat to-morrow. Guess we can put in Saturday and Sunday, and come back Monday.”

“ You think the experiment really worth making? ”

“ I dunno.” The Oldest Inhabitant mournfully regarded me in the moonlight. “ I dunno. I’ve tried it on some folks and it’s answered: they’ve never done any *hurryin’* since. Maybe it ’ill answer, maybe it won’t. You’re one of them restless insecks as is allers doin’ suthin else.”

“ Thank you. I’m going to turn in. I can’t stand that infernal whip-poor-will any longer.”

“ All right. Here’s your blankets. Roll yourself up, sonny, and go to sleep. Maybe I was a bit harsh with you, but it’s all for your good. To-morrow I’ll take you down to Oka and make a new man of you.”

I wrapped myself up in my blankets with a bunch of hay for a pillow, lay down beneath the apple tree, and fell asleep.

I was aroused the next morning by the Oldest Inhabitant. “ Guess you’d better git up and put out for home right away.”

“ Why? What’s the matter? ”

“ You’re a Jonah, you are. I’ve jus’ got the news.”

“ What news? ”

“ The monks of Oka is burnt out. They must ha’ heard you was *hurryin’* to see ’em. That’s what comes of you trottin’ round allers wantin’ to see things. Fust time I’ve ever knowed them monks to *hurry* about anything. Burnt out, they are. Burnt out! ”

“ But they haven’t *hurried*. After all, it’s taken them fifty years to get burnt out.”

“ You ain’t no more sympathy’n a ground hog,” said the disgusted Oldest Inhabitant. “ You’re the kind of man as ’ud *hurry* to a churchyard for his own fun’ral.”

“ No, I’m not, old friend. And some day I’ll come back and try a ‘chaw.’ I will. Honest Injun.”

“ I takes back all my inspersions,” said the deeply gratified Oldest Inhabitant.

CHAPTER VII.

A PROFESSIONAL HOAX

BEFORE returning to England I made a trip through the Rockies, and stayed for a few days at Smithson's Falls in British Columbia. The place was called Smithson's Falls not on account of its scenery, but owing to the lapses from grace—if history be true, they were frequent—of "Old Man" Smithson, the first settler in that auriferous region. Indeed, the little town is a veritable Eden on the mountain side, with Smithson for the original serpent. There was one hotel. In front of the hotel a placid lake. Opposite the lake ranged stony and stupendous mountains; opposite the hotel wandered a one-eared mule. A little to the left, below the hotel, a smelter belched forth sulphurous fumes, greatly to the annoyance of the only other occupant of the verandah, a lank, long-eared individual, who leaned lazily back in a "rocker," chewed one end of a huge cigar, and smoked the other. There was a genial twinkle in his remaining optic. As for his age, he had probably skipped about with the little hills mentioned in holy writ.

"Say, Mister," he remarked, "you're one of them London writin' fellers, ain't you? You've got that stuck on yourself kind of look anyway."

I admitted that London claimed me for its own.

"I noticed," he continued, "you didn't seem to know what to do with all them little dishes Juno brought you at breakfast this mornin'. It *would* take a Londoner to be that ignorant."

I said that I was not in the habit of dining at breakfast-time.

"Yes, I noticed you was that kind of partickler. I'm a newspaper-man myself, and have troubles of my own in the stomach and liver line. There was a feller here yesterday with an appetite as dainty as a spring trout's, and he was as hard to please as a teething babe. The waitresses quarrel among themselves as to who shan't wait on him, and the boss of thisyer hotel, when he sees the old gentleman come in at the front door, just puts out from the back. One day last week a new waitress came in to help Juno, and the new girl had to wait on this old gentleman I'm tellin' you of. The girl comes back to Juno with the old gent's orders for breakfast, and this is what she said: 'That old duffer's plum crazy. When I ran over the bill of fare to him, he just grunted: "Hebrews, thirteen and eight."' Someone hunted up a Bible, and we found out the old gentleman referred to the menoo: 'The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,' which was rough on the hotel."

I agreed that it was.

"I'm editor of the paper here," the man languidly explained, "and I've got a share in the smelter. What I make on the smelter I lose on the paper. Maybe you'd like to hear *The Smithsonian's Falls Gazette's* program (we spell it shorter'n you do in the Old Country). Guess you'll not find anything like it over there."

When he read his "program," I found that his conjecture was correct.

"Bright, ain't it?" he queried.

"It certainly is—bright."

"Means what it says?"

"*Sans dout.*"

"I don't catch on. Your English ain't clear."

"It's French—habitant French."

"Oh, is it. Well, we ain't got no use for habitant langwige up here. Say, what's your poison?"

"Nothing, thanks; too early in the evening."

"And I can't shoot you! That fool Sheriff's buzzin' round all the time, and I've got to go to press to-night."

You couldn't lend a hand at the machine? It's a hand-roller, and kind of exactin'."

"I'd much rather help to kill others by printing your paper than be shot by its editor."

"Well, don't get on your ear about it. Guess there's no need to hurry. The subscribers can wait a week; they're used to it. I was on our railway yesterday, and got shook up a bit. It's a safe road to travel on, and they don't offen kill a passenger, although sometimes a man dies of heart failure after looking at their freight charges. Just after daylight yesterday the engineer saw suthin white across the track. It was a washout" (a landslip), "and all the cars plunged into it and were ditched 'cept the Pullman. I was asleep in the Pullman, and didn't wake till an hour and a half after the accident. Not a soul was injured."

I expressed surprise.

"You London men want eddicatin'," said the editor. "You think you know everything when you come to this country, and ain't s'prised at nothin'. Now, I ain't a sport, but I'm open to bet a dollar I'll s'prise you in half an hour."

"You can't do it," and I deposited a dollar on the table.

He put it in his pocket. "Force of habit. Don't often see one, stranger."

"Your necessity is greater than mine. Keep it."

"You bet I will. Come along, and we'll start you pullin' press for all you're worth. Good-bye, Juno. Be virtuous and you'll be happy, but you won't have any fun."

The pretty waitress tossed her head indignantly. "I'll see you frozen first before I ever dance with you again."

We went into the street. "Guess it's this way," said my new acquaintance. "Up this passage. Come on."

I "came on" until we stopped in front of a trellised verandah covered with exquisite roses. Then we entered a cool room tastefully panelled in pitch pine. Here and there were a few good prints. Half-a-dozen men in evening dress lounged in rockers, with little tables hard by on which stood tumblers of iced drinks. An obsequious heathen Chineese waited in the doorway. In one hand he held a big scroll, on which was emblazoned: "Welcome to

Four Corners B.," and in the other a tumbler, which also contained something with ice in it.

As I turned from one smiling face to another, the "editor" tore off a tattered grey wig, removed a patch from his left eye, and gripped my hand. "Excuse the trick we've played you," he said, wringing my fingers as if he would never let them go again. "Excuse the trick, and how's dear old Fleet Street?"

We discussed "dear old Fleet Street" and—and other things!

CHAPTER VIII.

COMING BACK

I AM reluctantly coming to the conclusion that the most original thing I have ever done, after three months' absence at Four Corners, is to return to London when everybody is leaving it.

When one gets out of the somewhat limited range of intellectual readers, books and things literary count for nothing. After all, books, at their best, are inaccurate reproductions of what goes on in the world around us. That simple Child of Nature, the Red Man, who has never been educated after the manner of Board Schools, reads his fellows, and his methods of doing so are not without advantages which ours fail to possess. We make so many mistakes; beyond the primary one of getting drunk when opportunity serves, the Child of Nature makes few.

Gentle Reader, if you are, as I take you to be, one of the world's overworked mortals, just imagine what it is to find yourself on the deck of an ocean-going steamer. Without worrying about the Nemesis of sea-sickness, you give yourself a shake and say: "For three months I am not going to open a book; for three months I toil not, neither do I spin yarns; for three months I will become a Child of Nature, wander through virgin forests, explore great rivers, cross rocky ranges, live with people who do not care one straw for the things which matter." Think of the absolute joy of this new birth, for it is little else, this freedom from the artificialities, the conventionalities, the falsenesses, the petty meannesses of Civilisation, in order to encounter the wild, fierce grandeur of Nature, the

soothing influences of sun and shade, the whispering winds of primeval forests, to get up in the morning and loaf, to go to bed at night after having loafed all day, to wake next morn and loaf again with renewed zest! Ah, that is worth doing.

After this wild debauch of Nature comes the inevitable day when the inveterate loafer suddenly remembers that he is due back in London at such a date. He must go back to the world to earn his bread, renounce his freedom, come back to Civilisation. The things which have temporarily faded away from his memory return with added force. Absence has softened their severer features. He looks around him at mountain, forest, river, waves regretful hands to them, packs up, once more crosses the sea, takes the inevitable taxi at Euston, and returns to—Fleet Street.

But after the savage grandeur of British Columbia, the sweetness and light of Four Corners, how small and dirty are the streets! How little is this England to one who has traversed forests for days at a time, who has floated on the broad bosoms of mighty lakes, who has been through the Kicking Horse Pass and the Crow's Nest, who has communed with the eagle in his eyrie, and fled from the irate grizzly on the mountain slope! Heaps of letters await one about such little things. Here lie "proofs" of inky savour. It is not as sweet as the balsamic odours of the pines, but hath a personal appeal which will serve.

And so, in the course of a few days, old interests reassert themselves, old ambitions reawake, and little remains of a three months' holiday save recollections. In the back of one's head (I forget the exact organ which is responsible for the storage) are piled away heaps of stories, ideas for novels, anecdotes of the camp fire, character sketches, and so on. In the fullness of time they will come out as required; but at present I forget them as I hear again the Fraser river rushing through its rocky gorges. On a huge, projecting rock, just above the surface of the flood, stands a lonely Indian shack made of a few poles, with a skin or two thrown over them. On another part of the

rock smoulders a little fire, and by it, frying-pan in hand, kneels an individual who has never heard of Fleet Street. Once more the roar of the river mingles with the music of the pines. The nightfall descends with a sudden rush, and the Red Man and his White Brother share their humble supper as the Red Man grunts out his nightly request for a nip of the Firewater of the Paleface.

To-morrow "The Man Who Makes Signs on Birch Bark" will be caught up by the Vancouver train and whirled along the C.P.R. track to Civilisation. The stars come out, the roar of the river fades into a sigh, the pines and the cedars bend down from the impending cliffs, the sweet, soft wind sings out: "Good-night, good-night, good-ni-ight"; and Red Man and White seek their couches of cedar boughs.

The White Man awakes at dawn to find his Red Brother busy with the frying-pan. A sentimental sadness steals over the Child of Civilisation as he surveys the Child of Nature, and turns away from the frying-pan. But the Child of Nature lays a huge though sympathetic hand upon the shoulder of the Child of Civilisation. "Him heap good; fill um belly. Him heap hell good!" he says sentimentously, pointing to the contents of the frying-pan.

It may not be a Ruskinesque way of expressing himself, but the Child of Nature has hit upon a great truth, and the Child of Civilisation must travel back to Euston to "fill um belly." And so, he returns, wanders down to the Club, finds the painters in possession, and is disconsolate. But—

No more the winged muskitter
From the traveller takes his toll;
And the beer of Bass that's bitter
Brings balm unto his soul.

PART III.—TURKEY AND ASIA MINOR

CHAPTER I.

ROUND THE FORTIFICATIONS

GENERAL VALENTINE BAKER PASHA wanted to write a history of the Russo-Turkish War, and a military friend of his selected me to become his secretary. As a rule, when dictating, my chief sat back in an armchair with his eyes closed, and I took it down in shorthand. It was easy enough to take it down; the difficulty was to read it afterwards. Turkish names were rather complex, and generally began with "Baba" and ended with "Keui." Before we met, I was informed that the Pasha could not adequately write the history of the War without my invaluable assistance. Once I offered it. He said, "There is much in what you suggest"; and went on in his own way. After that, I always preserved a discreet silence.

When I arrived in Constantinople, I went to the War Office and sent the Pasha a telegram to say that England had lost me and that Turkey had found me. You may remember, poor Clement Scott once dedicated a book to his newly-married wife. The dedication was something like this: "To the woman who lost me in a London fog and found me at The Golden Gate." This was after she had joined him in San Francisco.

The Pasha was anxious to find me, but, by some mistake, the War Office telegraphed to him that his brother had arrived; whereupon the Pasha sent down to the station a staff officer and an escort of mounted warriors, whose

picturesque uniforms were still more picturesque by reason of the odd pieces of string which tied them together. As we rode into the courtyard at Baba Nakatch, the sentry presented arms. When I politely raised my hat, the staff officer murmured something about "these d—d civilians."

The next day dawned at last and life began to be interesting. After finishing up my morning's work, I strolled into the village and had coffee with the Imaum (the village priest). He spoke no English; I did not know Turkish; but, like Carlyle and Tennyson, we had a grand time. Every alternate day he called on me. We smoked in silence—a hubble bubble is a beastly thing until you are used to it—and separated with profound salaams. He called me "Kyatib Effendi" ("Mr. Secretary"), and I invariably addressed him as "Holy One." He said, through the interpreter, that if I saw him often enough I might become a True Believer and grow to be as holy as he was; and I told him, also through the interpreter, that next time he called I would teach him to play dominoes.

One day, I wanted to buy a pony, and the Imaum said that he knew of one without blemish, swift as the wind of the desert, and as affectionate as the four gazelle-eyed houris promised to all True Believers in Paradise. When he had further instructed me in the Faith, he would tell me more about the aforesaid houris. Then he sent for the pony, a beautiful little silver-grey Arab. In one of our rides, I was stopped by half-a-dozen hungry soldiers who proceeded to search my pockets, and were about to regale themselves with a parcel of sandwiches (my orderly had lagged behind) when I imprudently grunted to make them believe that the sandwiches were pork (as a matter of fact, they were beef), and could not be eaten by any True Believer. They turned "nasty," and were about to haul me off the pony when my orderly came up and mendaciously explained that I was "The little son of the great Bekir Pasha." Whereupon they fell down on their knees and I gave them some cigarettes. Later on, when I had

to part with my pony, the groom brought him round to say "good-bye." His beautiful eyes were starting out of his head, and he jumped about as if possessed. "What's the matter with him?" I asked anxiously. "Effendi," said the groom, "we want to get a good price for him in the bazaar, so we put salt in his water bucket and now he is full of fire." A minute later, the groom was full of kicks and the poor pony of fresh water.

My chief's services were required every day at the fortifications. We went into Pera every Friday and returned to Baba Nakatch the following Monday. Imagine to yourself a youngster of nineteen or twenty suddenly cast into the wonderful world of the East, with its glamour and dirt, its flies and fleas, its political intrigues, its rogues and picturesque vagabonds, its clear atmosphere and blue waters, its mosques, minarets, endless colour, and my unhappy friends the street dogs of Pera. Picture a credulous youth, cheated, robbed, and plundered by winning adepts in the art, a world of Embassies and starched diplomats, of beautiful women and strange, mysterious yashmaked Turkish belles, whose tiny feet in heelless slippers bore them along the Grand' Rue of Pera, accompanied by loathsome, squeaky-voiced eunuchs lest they should smile upon the Giaour. And, above all, the infinite sadness of ancient houses, time-worn tombs of holy men, and hordes of artistically maimed beggars displaying their sores on the Bridge of the Golden Horn, and ceaselessly crying in dull, indifferent tones, "Aman! Aman! Aman! tchelibé!"

There were other young Englishmen there, mostly student dragomen learning languages before being made deputy consuls in some remote Anatolian town. They played tennis, took street puppies from under a door, and brought them up as civilised dogs. And very charming dogs they were, too.

One dog lived in a hole under the doorstep of the house where I lodged in the Rue Venedik. Her name was Fatima, and, when her ears went up, she looked very like a wolf—a wolf obsessed by maternal cares and the strenuous endeavour to feed her puppies. I came out of the house

one day when it was raining heavily. A torrent of water rushed down the street and swept away one of the puppies who had incautiously put out his sharp little nose from under the doorstep. I was dressed to make calls, and had on a pair of "swagger" new gloves. It was a question of spoiling my gloves or of leaving the puppy to his fate, so I hauled him out of the water and Fatima, mistaking my intentions, flew at me and sent me rolling into the mud. Then, becoming aware of her mistake, she apologised, and, with the puppy between us, we sat on the doorstep and made friends.

It is an unwritten law among Pera dogs that none shall dare to venture out of his particular street. If he does, those in the next street will tear him to pieces. Knowing this, Fatima always accompanied me to the end of the street and then returned to her puppies with a biscuit in her mouth. When I came back, she would meet me at the boundary and tell me how the puppies were getting on.

There is an old saying that "dog will not eat dog," but it evidently does not apply to Pera dogs, for one evening, as I was going out to a dance, I saw a dog dying in the street. He was surrounded by a circle of sorrowing canine friends, and before I came back they had assuaged their sorrow by eating him. Only a few bones and bits of skin remained. A Pera dog so seldom gets a chance of a square meal that, in the circumstances, their action was excusable. Still, they avoided my reproachful eyes when I remonstrated with the leader of the pack, although his manner implied that there was no other way of burying the defunct.

I changed my rooms soon after this, and the windows looked down upon two converging streets, inhabited by their respective packs. To beguile the monotony of their sad lives, the two packs got up a blood feud, and left it to the leader of each pack to fight it out. One was a powerful black and the other a dirty fawn colour. When they "clinched," all the others gradually edged up, and the fray became general until a watchman came along and scattered them with his iron-shod staff.

At another time, I was in the crisis of typhoid, and the dogs, conscious that they were about to lose a friend, kept up a mournful howling beneath my windows. They disturbed me, and it was touch-and-go. When I was getting better, my doctor told me that, at considerable risk to himself, he had poisoned the pack and had their bodies carted away in the dead of night. I have often wondered whether his action was morally justifiable, for the scavenger street dogs were very useful members of society.

On the whole, the Turks did not actively ill-treat the street dogs; they only starved them. The Greeks, however, were cruel, and sometimes threw kettles of hot water over them. One beautiful Greek maiden, as heartless as she was lovely, dropped a litter of newly-born kittens on my head from a fifth-storey window, and

Smiled to see the ruin she had wrought.

I am told by Pera friends that the stray dogs are coming in from the country and once more populating Pera. I hope it is true. So great is the force of habit that the place would not seem natural without them. And we are all creatures of habit. There was once a retired Anglo-Indian who came back to England and found that he could not sleep because he missed the Indian insects which brought rest. Nearly worn out from want of sleep, he arranged with an elderly lady in Seven Dials to supply him with one small snuff-box full of fleas a week and turned them into his bed. He said that it was better than a shampoo.

Then there were the horses whose owners plied for hire in the street. Many of them were captured Russian chargers. Instead of taking a taxi, you hired a horse, mounted him, and his master ran behind holding on to his tail. Many and marvellous were the escapades of drunken sailors who mounted these steeds. There is a street in Pera called the Steppe Street, which consists of steep terraces, and a suridjee horse, knowing the condition of his rider, would carefully descend the street sideways. Indeed, I once saw a sailor arrive at the bottom of Steppe

Street, with his arms round the horse's neck and the saddle under the sagacious animal's belly.

The members of my Chief's Staff envied me, for they were mostly heavy weights and could never get the loan of one of his chargers. I was always allowed to ride them because I was a light weight. One would never cross running water without lying down in it. If the stream were shallow, I waited till he got up; if it were deep water, my faithful henchman, Halil (he was very grateful to me for constantly supplying him with string to keep his tattered uniform together), hauled me on to his own steed and took me home to dry.

I was once shown at Aleppo two wonderful bay Arab mares who could do their ninety miles a day for a week on end. In the Arab tents, the foals ran about and played with the children, who hauled themselves up by their tails or legs. An Arab guards the pedigree of his mare as jealously as his life.

The only other animal in whom I was interested at the fortifications was Baker Pasha's black cat, who accompanied him in a lunch basket on all his travels, and was made much of by Reilly, his Irish servant. But she was an insidious female with a knack of luring Turkish Toms into my bedroom and then miaowing for Reilly to clear them out with a bootjack. This end achieved, she brought them in again, and, lying on my chest, used language unbecoming a lady of her high lineage. When she presented us with a basketful of kittens, they all belonged to different types.

Our quarters were situated on the outskirts of Baba Nakatch, and the "hold Himaum," as Reilly called him, and the Muezzin, as soon as I had picked up a smattering of Turkish, perseveringly endeavoured to make me a Moslem. They talked at me in this wise as we sat by the village fountain under the shade of a spreading plane tree:—

IMAUM: "Little does this engaging young Giaour know of the joys reserved for the Faithful under the shadow of Allah's wing."

MUEZZIN: "Inshallah, he may yet be tempted by the four houris, moon-faced and of a plenteous fatness, reserved for all True Believers."

IMAUM: "The Paradise of all True Believers awaits him if he acknowledge there is but one God and Muhammad is the Prophet of God."

MUEZZIN: "Mashallah, he will thus escape the everlasting darkness of the Frankish Eblis."

IMAUM: "Then will I, as a foretaste of the happiness of the True Believer, give him a village houri in marriage."

MUEZZIN: "I hasten to slay a lamb for the wedding feast if he but consent."

Seeing that matters were becoming serious, I generally sought safety in flight. This, after doing my chief's work, was the order of my day: Halil brought round my pony and I cantered away, leaving the Imaum and the Muezzin praying for me.

If you have once seen a small Turkish village, you have seen them all. Some are dirtier than others, have a larger and riper crop of insects; but for the most part there are a couple of cobble-paved streets with a square. In the square stands a fountain, generally of marble, with a big plane tree under which the village women gather in soul-satisfying silence. Rare creatures that they are, they do not seem to want to talk, and, with their loose-flowing garments, heelless slippers, and yashmaks brought round the upper and lower part of the face, shuffle through existence with an abstracted air. Men, particularly giaour giupeks (infidel dogs), do not appear to interest them, for, when a stranger comes along they gently but firmly turn their faces to the wall and convey an impression of human bolsters bisected by a girdle. Sometimes, if they are very pretty, by a rare chance the head is slightly moved, the yashmak slips a little, and beautiful soft lustrous brown eyes momentarily survey the intruder, then turn away. If he is wise, and a peasant slouches round the corner, the giaour does not ask for more. The peasant is generally athletic and might give him too much.

The floors of the little shops are raised about two feet from the ground. Here the owner sits meditating. The amount of meditation that a Turkish merchant in a serene, effortless manner gets through during the course of the day is perfectly marvellous. Most people do their thinking in a hurry. Not so the Turkish shopkeeper. He just sits and sits and sits "until he most takes root." If you want to buy anything, he is coldly polite. You have disturbed him and the responsibility is yours.

The village of Baba Nakatch lay midway in the line of fortifications between Lake Derkos and the Black Sea. At a distance, as it nestled in a hollow between two frowning forts, it was singularly pretty. The lower parts of the houses were of rough stone, surmounted by quaintly fashioned old woodwork, with here and there a more aspiring mansion built entirely of stone. The lofty minaret of the mosque—it had but one—rose gracefully through a surrounding grove of feathery-foliaged acacias. Roads there were, but full of holes, precipitous, slippery, dangerous to traverse on a dark night. Drains? Well, "comparisons are odorous"; so are Turkish drains!

A dozen half-wild, ferocious dogs rush out to meet me on my return from my ride. They are large, powerful brutes, likely to prove awkward antagonists, and, with blood-stained muzzles and gleaming teeth, look so many canine fiends! Away bolts my trustworthy (?) Halil to the rear, where he prudently stops until my revolver lays one of my assailants low. Then he comes back quivering like a jelly-fish.

"My Effendi is a wonderful warrior," he presently observes, swaggering up to the assembled villagers; "the little cannon of my lord," pointing to the revolver, "can slay a hundred Moscovs without being once fed. O dog and son of a dog," addressing the defunct animal, "see what is your fate for barking at my Effendi," and, with a parting kick at his prostrate foe, he leads my pony into the stable.

I am aroused at midnight by the combined sounds of a drum and very primitive clarionet, now and then inter-

mingled with joyous shouts. Halil is nowhere to be found. Rising hastily, I go to the village green to see what the noise means.

A number of villagers squat round in a circle, watching the fantastic movements of five or six dancers. Foremost among the dancers is Halil, attired in my dress coat, a pair of baggy, overpoweringly bright yellow trousers, and a red sash round his waist. To administer a hearty cuff and drag him out of the magic circle is the work of a moment.

“O sheep and son of a burnt mother”—unconsciously adopting Halil’s favourite phraseology—“what are you doing with my coat?”

Halil prostrates himself before me and expresses a hope that I may live a thousand years.

“Yes, yes; that’s all very well, but how came you to sneak that coat?”

“Effendi, it must have been the devil put it into my head. I love dancing, I love jumping. When people see me jump like a deer, they exalt my lord’s liberality in feeding me so well to give me such strength.”

Next morning, Halil the irrepressible informs me that the wife of the headman of the village, who has lately presented him with a son and heir, is about to march in procession to the bath, and the Headman wants me to join in the procession. The principal part of the ceremony consists in anointing the lady with fragrant oils and spices, and then allowing her female friends and acquaintances to lick them off her nude body. Whoever licks most will be proportionately lucky should she ever be placed in a similar situation.

My first introduction to Halil was quaint, for he prostrated himself before me and requested through the Dragoman that besides being a father to him, I would give him a medjidieh (four shillings) a week as my servant. After we had arranged matters, he squatted down outside my door and howled with delight. Some weeks later, he saved my life, and could not understand why I objected to his killing the Dragoman whom I had kicked downstairs

for insulting me; at the same time, he thoughtfully brought a pail to catch the Dragoman's blood. With tears in his eyes, Halil declared that he would conduct the affair with as little mess as possible.

Rather than die the death, the Dragoman humbly apologised, and, "to show his love for me," brought me a dish of artistically-sliced pomegranates full of juice. I was about to swallow a slice when Halil rushed in, snatched it out of my hand, seized the Dragoman by the throat, bore him to the floor, and, forcing the rascal's mouth open with the back of his knife, made him swallow the slice of pomegranate.

"What's it all about?" I angrily asked the Dragoman.

"Effendi, I was hasty. When you kicked me downstairs because I charged you four times too much for that fat goose for the Pasha's dinner, I went to a friend of mine and got him to poison these slices of pomegranate. Now I am slain by that pig of a Halil. May his mother's grave be defiled."

"Well, it's done now; better luck next time," I said cheerfully, as he began to wriggle.

"Effendi, I am going to die. The pain in my stomach waxes. Nothing can save me."

But, greatly to Halil's disgust, I made a rough and ready emetic with mustard and salt and water, putting in a dash of Worcester sauce as a forlorn hope.

In spite of my inexperience it was a good emetic, but Halil was not pleased at having to clear up after the Dragoman had taken it. As soon as he felt well enough, the rascal ran away and was replaced by an even greater scoundrel than himself.

Like most Turkish villages, Baba Nakatch was infested with fleas. So great is the Turk's dislike to destroying animal life that when he catches one of those troublesome insects he puts it unharmed on the floor to show his fellow-feeling with St. Dunstan, who,

Though his cassock was swarming with all kinds of vermin,
Would not take the life of a flea.

Long strings of camels plod slowly into the courtyard laden with provisions for the soldiers at work on the fortifications. They are great shaggy, ungainly-looking brutes, preceded by their driver, mounted on an infinitesimal jackass. Suddenly, the leading camel makes a snap at the driver's left ear, but only succeeds in carrying off his fez. The enraged driver wheels round his donkey under the very nose of the camel, thus bringing the whole train to a halt.

"O depraved offspring of a vicious sire," he begins, striking the camel on the nose, "your mother was a lewd camel (whack), your grandmother was worse than your mother (whack! whack!), and," summoning up all his energies for a final burst of cumulative abuse, "your great-grandmother was more unchaste than either your mother or your grandmother" (whack! whack! whack!).

"The Effendi needs candles ere the night fiends rove abroad?" gushingly enquires Halil. "Lo! I will run with all the swiftness of the wind to the bakal's (huckster's), that my lord may not be left in darkness. My lord must not fear to trust me. Am I not his friend, his brother? Ibrahim is a thief, Yusuf is a thief, Omar is a thief; but I am honest Halil, brave Halil, Halil who fights for God and the Fadishah (the Sultan), and who wrongs no man of a sesame seed. See what beautiful candles I will purchase for my lord"; and by way of putting a girle round the earth in forty minutes, he slowly saunters off at a pace which the smallest tortoise would blush to imitate.

In half an hour he returns. "See, Effendi, the candles; the beautiful candles which thy slave has purchased," waving three long attenuated tallow dips in the air.

"Don't you believe that there 'Alil, sir," says Reilly. "I see'd him just now a-sticking four candles up his sleeve."

The moonlight floods the room, rendering the candles a superfluous precaution against the coming of evilly-disposed fiends of the night. On the roof above, the clatter-

clatter of the storks is heard as they make love with outstretched beaks. Every now and then they succeed in touching their tail feathers with the back of their beaks, although the process involves a greater variety of contortions and twistings of the neck than those indulged in by any professional sword-swallower. Away below, around, above, dotted about on the hillsides, gleam the sentinel watch-fires of the soldiers. Now, a bugle-call is faintly re-echoed from a distant hill. With clanking sword and jingling spur the patrol slowly passes along the winding road. The sharp, shrill barks of the wild dogs give the alarm ere they slink away into the shadow. From a neighbouring lattice comes the sound of a guitar. As, throwing aside her yashmak, the singer appears at the window, the moonlight falls upon a face of singular beauty. Her large, dark, almond-shaped eyes gaze expectantly at the acacia grove, and the slender, henna-tipped fingers strike a few melancholy chords. After a brief prelude, she pours out her soul in a passionate love song, the last verse of which changes to the weary pleading and longing of one who sings in vain.

The lattice suddenly closes, the refrain dies away on the midnight air and, for a time, all is silent.

I began to have poetic yearnings, and to write what I imagined to be verse. Sir Walter Besant once said to me, "How dear those first verses seem to us, and what rubbish they are!" Here is one of the few specimens I have preserved. It has the merit of brevity:—

LAMENT FOR ZULEIKA.

As falls night's shade upon yon restless sea,
 So sweeps the gathering darkness over me;
 No morrow's sun my drooping heart can cheer,
 But chill and dull 'twill linger round thy bier.
 The weeping maids will bear thee on thy way
 Unto the tomb that waits thy bridal day.
 Woe! Woe! is me, that we shall never more
 Dance 'neath the vines or roam beside the shore,
 Thy face will haunt me wheresoe'er I go,
 The dream of bliss that we can never know
 Will make to me this living world a tomb,
 Where I must weep for aye in ceaseless gloom.

Mute the cicalas, and I, pitying, heard
The youth's deep sobs by bitter anguish stirred.
Adown the valley shrilled the mourners' wail
For sweet Zuleika lying chill and pale,
The cypress strewn upon her wedding veil.
The myriad voices of the rustling leaves,
The swallows darting 'neath the rustic eaves,
The plaintive notes of Philomel's sad song
In mournful cadence rising sweet and strong—
All seemed to murmur, as I turned to go,
"He loved her so! Alas! he loved her so."

How one changes! When I had perpetrated this effusion, I asked myself whether it was right to worry Tennyson in his old age by cutting him out. Fortunately, he never made Zuleika's acquaintance. As a matter of fact, neither did I. The storks would not let me sleep one night, and, as I was tired of calling them names, I "dropped into poetry."

CHAPTER II.

IN PERA

WHEN we were finally settled in Pera and I had arranged for rooms near the Crimean Memorial Church, my shrimp-like landlord—a decayed specimen of English humanity drifted Eastward—gave me an abominable dinner cooked by his wife. She was a weird-looking person, with snaky black ringlets clinging to her lean neck, and my landlord, when he thought I was safely settled down, informed me that she had periodical fits of madness. So had her cookery.

“Where can I go for a stroll?” I asked after dinner.

The landlord turned his one eye solemnly on me. “Young Men’s Christian Association? They play draughts there.”

I shook my head. “Not to-night.”

“No, I thought not to-night. Excuse me, sir, but you’re too young and too small to go wandering about here without anyone to take care of you.”

I resented this imputation on my youth. “I am going, for all that.”

The landlord washed his hands with invisible soap and imperceptible water and implied that my blood would be on my own head or my own back if anyone stabbed me from behind. Then he went away and came back with a penny Chinese lantern with an unlighted candle stuck in the middle. “One franc,” he said softly.

“What am I to do with this thing?”

“You’re not allowed out at night after ten unless you carry a light. It’s a municipal regulation, sir.”

“ Why? ”

The landlord stroked a pointed chin, then shifted thin fingers to his educated whisker. “ It’s this way, sir. S’pose a thief or a murderer wants to get you, you walk in the middle of the road with your lighted lantern.”

“ Well? ”

“ He hides behind a buttress and knifes you in the back as you pass.”

“ I see. How thoughtful of the Municipality to encourage home industries like that! ”

He again stroked his chin. “ A franc, please, sir.”

I paid the franc, took the candle out of the lantern, crumpled up the latter, and placed them both in my pocket. I also put a loaded revolver beside them, then sallied forth on my adventurous career.

Though a crescent moon shone over the Bosphorus, it failed to light up the recesses of the tortuous streets where, to my excited imagination, every buttress sheltered a potential assassin. Here and there I tumbled over a dog, who limply withdrew without listening to my apologies.

At the top of the street, four zaptiehs (native policemen) energetically pursued a man who stumbled just as he reached me. Whereupon his pursuers came up and proceeded to belabour him with the butts of their guns. “ Why, O sons of the Prophet, this unkindness? ” Their English was limited. “ He dam thief. He run away. We run after him,” said the leader of the party. “ But why do you whack him? ” “ He gives us the trouble to run after him,” said one member, who spoke English fairly well. “ You give one medjidieh, we let him go.”

I gave the zaptieh a medjidieh (about four shillings) and the thief disappeared in the darkness. We exchanged cigarettes and the zaptieh became affable. “ You come this way next night, we run after some more thief for you,” he suggested, as we parted with expressions of mutual esteem.

I continued my walk amid a weird crowd of all nationalities until I came to a music hall, with some sailors (tipsy) laid outside in a row while a sober one watched them until

it should be his turn to be watched. Inside the music hall were little marble-topped tables, where people sat drinking strange drinks and were waited on by lightly-attired damsels, who took sips from the customers' glasses, then went off and appeared on the stage and sang songs.

"You come wit' me, Effendi, I tak' you behind," suggested a fat Armenian. "Give me tcherik" (a shilling) "I show you rouge et noir tables. You win mosh money."

I followed my guide down a narrow passage into a big room where rouge et noir was being played.

"You play, you win mosh money," said the tempter at my elbow.

I played and was allowed to win "mosh money," at least five medjidiehs.

Satisfied with this unlooked-for wealth, I decided to return to my rooms, paid the tempter another shilling, and started back.

The Grand' Rue was crowded with people. Everyone walked in the middle of the road, and the little lanterns reminded one of gigantic fireflies. Only the private houses and the shops were black, silent, formidable.

When I reached the street turning down to the Memorial Church the moon had disappeared. It was like going into a tunnel. No lantern cast a flickering light on the stone cobbles. A watchman came along, striking his iron-shod stick at the cobbles to let thieves know where he was, eyed me suspiciously, and passed on. Then the cold nose of a hungry dog rubbed against my leg and startled me.

The house was silent as the grave. I knocked, and the noise deafened me. A shuffling step sounded in the passage, the door was cautiously unbarred and opened with the chain still on. "Who is it?" quavered the landlord's voice.

"Only me."

"Lucky you didn't stay any later, sir. There's a Greek family over the way starts out with their knives at eleven," said the landlord as he cautiously unfastened the chain.

"But what does that matter?"

" Nothing much, sir, only the Bosphorus is pretty handy "; and the landlord shuffled down to his subterranean lair.

I was not proud, only pleased with myself, for had I not seen life and won five medjidiehs? My expenditure had been one medjidieh to the zaptiehs, two tcheriks to the tempter, and one for some strange pink-coloured liquid which a scantily-attired music hall waitress had obligingly swallowed for me. Result to the good, three and a quarter medjidiehs. Call it three, after deducting the price of the lantern.

Every night, the shrimp-like one implored me to lock my bedroom door, which I was accustomed to leave open. One night, I felt a bony hand pass softly over my face and linger on my throat. There was a scuffle, and I woke up to find myself looking apprehensively at a dagger on the floor. When a doctor arrived, he said that my landlady had one of her periodical fits of madness, and it would be wise for me to leave the place at once.

I moved, and came back a week later for my clothes. The iron door was unbarred by the shrimp-like one, and he reluctantly admitted the two men I had brought with me to pack my things. In the midst of our task, a sad voice at the door said, " Is that my dear Mr. Burgin? I want to kiss him." " Better kiss her, sir, and we'll go on with the packing," gruffly suggested one of the men. " I'll help with the packing," said the madwoman, and picking up a huge flower pot with an oleander in it dropped it out of a window, where, after just missing a travelling pedlar, it shattered to pieces on the cobble stones.

The next time I went to the house to enquire after the poor woman, she opened the door herself. " You needn't be afraid. I'm all right now, sir," she said quietly. " I wouldn't hurt a fly. If you'll come back here to live, I'll promise to *try* not to cut your throat again."

Before the novelty of everything Eastern vanishes time passes very quickly in Constantinople. And there are many things strange to English ideas. As I turned out of the Grand' Rue into the Champs des Morts one morning

I suddenly came upon a funeral procession. In an open coffin lay the corpse of a young girl attired in the robe that was to have graced her bridal. Long black tresses half shrouded her breast. Flowers were on the pillow, and lent a rosy tint to her features. The coffin was preceded by priests droning a dull, mechanical dirge. Amid a crowd of boys swinging tapers and bearing incense, the choking sobs of the dead girl's friends rose to a wail of anguish. The sunlight vanished, and a dark cloud fell upon the set features of the unhappy bridegroom, who followed after.

In the Cities of Silence, for so the Turks designate their burying grounds, the slabs of the graves are often perforated with holes to allow of the growth of beautiful flowers which scent the air around. It has been erroneously stated by some writers that Turkish women repair to the last resting places of their deceased friends on Friday because they believe that the dead return to a consciousness of their several ties. This is not so. Every Friday and Monday evening the Turks pray for the repose of the souls of their dead; they have no stated times for visiting the Cities of Silence other than those dictated by the promptings of grief.

It is a disgusting as well as a piteous sight to see the street beggars on the Bridge of the Golden Horn; for many of them are lepers. Several beggars in Pera, however, own a large amount of property. One well-known man has houses worth 10,000 liras, and yet is to be seen in filthy rags begging. A poor governess who was very charitable used to give him a piastre twice a week. One day she missed a lira (pound), and thought she must have given it to the beggar by mistake. He had gone home for the day, so she followed him to his house on the Taxime. He received her graciously, looking like a Pasha at least in his magnificent robes. "I never like to lose a good client," he said, and sent for his bag of takings. "If there's a lira there, we shall find it." Sure enough, the lira was there. "Take it," he continued, and the poor girl, full of thanks, was hurrying away when the beggar stopped

her. "Wait a moment; you haven't given me the piastre."

Day by day, the manners and customs of the people around me became less strange as I distinguished their different national characteristics. The Greeks in particular are exceedingly polite, but very revengeful. A young Greek fell in love with a Greek girl, though he knew that her parents would not listen to his suit. The lovers ran away and got married. Four or five months later the girl's brother came to see her, stayed a couple of months, and told her that their parents' anger was gradually dying away. One evening the brother and the young couple were walking outside the city. The Greek suddenly pulled out a couple of revolvers, dropped behind, shot husband and wife in the back, and went home to receive his parents' blessing.

Greatly to the astonishment of the Turks, the young bloods of the English colony played football in the autumn. When the ball once went out of bounds, the crowds formed impromptu sides, and those who were getting the worst of it drew their knives on the stronger faction. In the struggle, the football was cut to pieces. Here is what purports to be the translation of a letter which appeared in a Turkish paper:—

Effendi,

Like all other mouhadjirs, being fond of work, I went to Kadikeui seeking employment on Saturday last, and, my exertions not being crowned with success, laid myself down on the field of Hassan to forget my sorrow in slumber. It was raining; and I and my ass-companions in misfortune—were alone on the field. Whilst dreaming of kebabs, I was aroused by voices, and, rising on my elbow, saw sixteen English tchelibeas, some striped like the tiger at Beyler-bey, and some plain. The plain men were called "Handsome," and the striped men were called "Uglies." One young striped man suddenly kicked a huge leathern ball into the stomach of an Ugly. Then the other Uglies took the ball out of their companion's stomach and stimulated him to vengeance; for, with the ball under his arm, he rushed at the youth who had injured him. Undismayed by his ferocious aspect, the youth caught him in his arms and threw him on the ground: the other "Handsome" hurled themselves upon the injured youth until he cried out aloud. Seeing the ball rolling past them, they let go their victim and kicked it over two posts. The plain man who had

been struck by the ball in his stomach, now kicked it into the stomach of the striped man. Whilst he was getting it out, I came forward to help him; but his companions with wild yells kicked me out of the field. Surely these Giaours are afflicted of Allah!

We have recently had ample evidence of the Turk's bad qualities. Fatalism and a complete lack of energy entirely negative his good ones. This applies to all the minor as well as to the greater evils of life. Your horse, for instance, is never at the door at the appointed time. When it does come, the girths are not properly fastened, the throat-lash is too tight, the curb too loose, your man will insist on your mounting on the wrong side, and you ride off not at all mollified by the grave chorus of idlers at the door: "Ah, he knows how to get upon a horse; the Effendi will soon cease to ride like a Giaour giupek (infidel dog)."

Tuesday is the unlucky day in Turkey. Horses and men meeting in the street turn to the left. Ceilings are made of wood, doors of plaster. The teeth of saws are bent backwards. Turks weigh instead of measuring all kinds of fruit, leave the head covered but take off their shoes when entering a house, and, instead of shaking the head, tip it back and say "No." Oxen, when shod, are turned entirely over on their backs, and all the sheep carry stupendous tails, about the shape and sometimes the size of a sofa cushion. As the late Colonel Burnaby once said to my Chief: "The Turks are just the inside-outest and the outside-insidest, the bottomsides-upwardest and the topsides-downwardest, the backside-forwardest and the forward-side-downwardest people I have ever seen."

Bribery, too, is an everyday business in Turkey. When you call on the man to be bribed, you are ushered into a room in which the only ornament is a big pot or vase on a Turkish table. If the amount you offer seems fair, the secretary leaves you in order to consult his master, who says he will think the matter over. While you are alone, you put your bribe into the vase. All the other succeeding suitors do the same. The man who bids highest gets the place, and the Minister retains the whole of the money in the vase.

After a sharp attack of typhoid, I was sent down to the Dardanelles in the Spring because it was warmer there. It would be disrespectful when visiting the Dardanelles not to allude to the time-honoured joke about them. "Know anything of the Dardanelles?" asked one loungeur of another, as they discussed their Eastern experiences. "Know anything about them? Rather. Awflee jolly people. Dined with 'em in Cairo."

Come with me, Gentle Reader, to Chanak-kelessi. Byron and Marlowe and the guide-books will tell you all about—

Amorous Leander, beautiful and young,
Whose tragedy divine Musæus sung;

and how—

So lovely-fair was Hero, Venus' nun,
As Nature wept, thinking she was undone
Because she took more beauty from her than she left,
And of such wondrous beauty left her bereft.

When I began to emerge from the kingdom of dreams and shadows with that ravenous appetite which is the most painful part of typhoid, an old lady friend asked me: "My dear boy, how are you getting on?" "Oh, very well," I said; "but they don't give me enough to eat. If I could only get hold of a jolly big plum cake, how I should enjoy it!" "You shall have it at once. I'll go home and get my cook to make you one," she said, filled with indignation, then sought the doctor. "Why can't you give that poor boy enough to eat?" she angrily demanded. "You know well enough that he's a stranger in a strange country, and that his mother isn't here to look after him. He says he's starving and wants a plum cake. I am going home to have one made for him at once." "Oh, are you?" replied the doctor. "By the way, if you don't mind, there's something else you might bring with you." "I will do anything I can for the poor boy," she said with a sniff. "It's perfectly awful to think that—" "Yes, I know," said the doctor benignantly, "but if you insist on bringing a cake, you'd better bring a tombstone too; for if he eats the one, he'll require the other." Then he explained to her that

recovery from typhoid is mainly a question of careful diet and nursing, and that patients are very often killed in the "recovery stage" by the injudicious attempts of friends to appease their intolerable hunger.

But I had left grim Death behind me at Constantinople, and was gently helped ashore at Chanak by a tom-cat whiskered Kavasse. The stately steamer departed, and the Kavasse, taking off his gold-embroidered coat, and leaving his arsenal of weapons in charge of a lowly friend, carried me to the marble-floored house of my host, through the narrow streets of the little town, which were full of the customary beggars and street curs. After tucking up his trousers, the Kavasse forded the Scamander—a turbulent torrent three inches deep—and carried me into the house. "The small English Effendi," he said, carefully depositing me on a lounge chair. "Pray Allah fatten him, or they will laugh at our beards in the bazaar."

I spent most of my time in sleeping and eating, and in "chumming up" with the Turkish guardian of one of the forts, who spoke a little broken English. "Inglis pipple not bad pipple," he declared to me one day. "'Merican pipple most d—d wicked pipple." His reason for this sweeping assertion was that the Turkish Government had once bought a large number of submarine torpedoes from an American contractor. These torpedoes had been industriously distributed along the bottom of the Straits between Europe and Asia, just before the Russo-Turkish war, and were supposed to render the passage impregnable. In an unusual fit of activity after the war, the Turkish officials took up these torpedoes, and they nearly all proved to be dummies. Hence the guardian of the fort's indignation at the "'Merican pipple." Like a true son of Islam, he did not believe in torpedoes of any sort. "Allah made fish to swim in the waters, and porpoises and things; but not torpedoes."

The little town of Chanak, like all other Turkish towns and villages, has its minaretted mosque, where the old Muezzin emerged at frequent intervals during the day to call true believers to prayer. Every day I loafed in my

chair hard by the mosque and watched the Muezzin pop out of the door at the lowest balcony, drone his monotonous call, then be lost to sight, only to reappear nearer the minaret's summit and anxiously stare in the direction of Egypt, looking for the coming of the first stork.

The first day the storks came, all the village children caught frogs and flung them on the roofs of the houses. They had a theory that the storks were too tired after their journey to forage for food. Papa and Mamma Stork benignantly accepted these offerings, and set to work to inspect the cartload of thick sticks which made their home. Most of them built their nests on the roofs; a few selected ancient trees near the outskirts of the town. Turkish children, as a rule, are very kind to birds and animals, although they will not kill a wounded beast to put it out of its pain because the Koran forbids the taking of life. In a corner of the village school, where the little children sat cross-legged, a pair of swallows began to build their nest, and all day long flew in and out of the windows without being molested.

Three days after my arrival, my host gave a tennis party in his charming garden, first arranging me a comfortably cushioned seat in the fork of a tree about five feet from the ground, and tying me up there so that I should not fall out when sleep overtook me. His theory was that I should be out of the way up in the tree, for I had a curious knack of beginning a sentence just after lunch and then waking at tea-time to finish it. "You're not up to meeting strangers yet," said my host, racquet in hand. "When you feel dull, have a nap, and we'll wake you up again at tea-time. You must have put on a pound of flesh since yesterday."

Looking drowsily from my perch in the tree, I saw my host's two pretty daughters arranging the net. The next moment there was a wild shriek and a hurried stampede as a great, ungainly form made for the net. Without wasting time in explanations, the buffalo—for such it was—a domestic variety used for drawing arabas and supplying milk—charged into the net and succeeded in wrapping itself

up in it, then burst across the lawn after my host's flying figure.

My host was an active man; the buffalo was hampered by the net. Presently the beast gave up the chase, made straight for a shed, butted the door open, and disappeared within.

"Everyone all right?" cautiously enquired "Papa" from the top of a neighbouring wall.

A plaintive, girlish voice sounded from an adjacent tree. "Papa, papa, I told you that was an unreasonable buffalo, but you would take away her calf."

As the sun set, a long procession of veiled Turkish women wound across the sombre fields. If the Giaour came too near, they turned their backs on him—that is, the old ones did. If the women happened to be young and handsome, the yashmaks fell a little, revealing large, dark, glorious eyes, full of tender pity for "the Effendi with a stick," as they took to calling me. Some of them carried antique vases and tear bottles, which they had dug up in the fields. Nothing delighted them so much as to exchange these relics of the past for brand-new medicine bottles. As they shuffled homewards, their back view was not picturesque. Imagine a leather bolster, with a string round its waist, two flopping slippers and bare heels. They flapped slowly along in the gathering gloom, suggesting something grotesquely desolate. The darkness descended suddenly, the potter put aside his wheel, the storks slept, the grey-beards in the bazaars smoked the tchibouk of consolation, and over the darkened plain began to creep the first faint, star of eve.

CHAPTER III.

OFF TO ASIA MINOR

JUST as I began to feel homesick, my Chief was appointed head of a Reform Commission; I was made secretary to the Commission; and we started off for Alexandretta with the blissful idea that the result of our labours would be to change everything and everybody for the better in the "Unchanging East." We were to visit Aleppo, Diabekir, and other big towns, and go down the Tigris on rafts (the kellaks of the Romans) to Baghdad and Mosul. At least, that was our original intention; but circumstances prevented us from reaching Baghdad, and we abandoned our rafts in order to journey northward to Armenia, and thence to Erzeroum. All these regions, however, have become so well known to everyone during the war, that I do not intend to describe them in detail. I shall, therefore, mainly confine myself to incidents, places, and legends which, possibly, are less familiar.

The November weather was dull and drizzling. I was put into a military uniform in order to look more imposing, but found it very tight and uncomfortable. Most of my waking hours were occupied in trying to keep a sword, nearly as long as myself, from getting between my legs. It proved very useful afterwards as a toasting fork and to ward off evilly-disposed dogs.

Until we reached Alexandretta, the most exciting event was the stealing of the captain's trousers by a feminine Russian pilgrim. When informed of his loss, the Captain raved at the steward who had put them out to air, and offered a lira reward for their recovery. The day after the

trousers had disappeared, he sent for the steward: "Have you found out who has my trousers?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then get them back at once."

"Very sorry, but I daren't, sir."

"Why not?"

"The Russian lady who stole 'em has put 'em on, sir, and dares anybody to take 'em off again."

At Alexandretta I made my first intimate acquaintance with that freak of Nature facetiously described by Rudyard Kipling as "the cam-u-el." We were all ready to start when a baggage-mule slipped his load, and we had to begin again. The camel I was to ride lay on the ground with his knees doubled up under him. When he made a vicious grab at my arm, a native hit him on the head with a big stick. A she-camel sympathised with him at this insult. She seemed so peaceful that I elected to ride her, leaving my man to mount the head of the family. "'Tain't no good, sir," he earnestly protested. "I can do anything with a bloomin' 'orse, but this crooked-necked thing ain't natural, he ain't; I can't tell which way he's going, and he's trying to chew my toe off, sir. Am I to ride him on the curb or with a snaffle?"

I was once talking to an old Turkish Pasha, and asked him why the camel's eyes are invariably full of tears, and, after gravely stroking his beard, he replied: "The camel has always been like that. A certain Hadji, moved by compassion for this piteous appearance of the camel, halted a string of them one day, preceded by a man on a worn-out old donkey. "Why this perpetual sorrow, O humpbacked one? Is it because you are underfed?" "No, O Hadji," replied the camel; "it is not that." "Or forced to go into desert tracks, whither no one would journey from choice?" "No, O Hadji. "Or perpetually reviled by your master?" "No, O Hadji." "Or continually beaten?" "No, O Hadji." "Then why is it you are sorrowful?" "Because, O Hadji, I can never keep to the straight path, and am always led by an ass."

"That," added the Pasha, "is the situation of the

Turkish Government; it can never keep the straight path, and is always led by an ass."

Our camel-leader was the one man I have ever met who never argued. If anything went wrong and people sought to drag him into an argument, he stroked his long beard, observed that Allah was merciful and it would be all right a thousand years hence, or words to that effect. The only time I ever saw him even slightly annoyed was when my camel took a piece out of the back of his neck, and he suggested that the animal was thoughtless in wronging one who had been more than a father to her. He got off his donkey, spread his carpet, and stopped the whole party for three-quarters of an hour whilst he prayed to Allah to teach him patience and not to be so intemperate in the expression of his wrath.

At first the motion of the camels was not unpleasant as they swayed slowly from side to side. In a little while, however, one began to feel seasick and look round for a sympathetic steward. The way led up through the mountains, and it was with great difficulty that I could keep on the sort of sloping roof which constituted the camel's back.

We halted for the night at the hut of a Coord chief. Two or three little Coords, each wearing a single dirty garment, ran about the smoky room. A sandy cat, three fowls, a colt, and five cows occupied the lower end of the hut. The owner said that they helped to keep him warm, and he wasn't going to turn them out for anyone. In order to avoid the insidious attacks of the insects which abounded, we spread waterproof mackintoshes on the floor, sprinkled a ring of Keating round us, and made ourselves as comfortable as circumstances permitted.

During my wanderings, I once slept in the house of a Coord who had settled down to a non-nomadic life and turned innkeeper. Mattresses were spread in a row on the floor; a coverlet provided for each; and we turned in "all standing." In the morning I was awakened by the cry of a child. The bed next to mine was occupied by mine host, his pretty young wife, and a curly-pated, black-eyed little girl of six. Not a whit embarrassed by my

presence, the lady sat up, sleeked her raven tresses, tied a handkerchief round them, gave herself a shake, and her toilet was complete.

“What are you going to give me?” demanded the inn-keeper, his fine eyes twinkling with cupidity.

“Make out your bill.”

The bill amounted to four shillings. I paid the man, and he was so well satisfied that when I came again I would be “welcome to eat his eyes and liver.”

A Coordish chief once told me that he captured an American missionary, who argued with him for two hours why his, the missionary's, throat should not be cut. “And did you cut it?” I asked. “No, Effendi,” replied the Coord. “There are too many of these American missionaries about, and I let this one go so that he might talk all the others to death.”

At Aleppo was an old citadel which dated back to the time of the Saracens, and a huge square where the camels lay at night. The camel-drivers sat round a fire in the centre, whilst their charges chewed their evening meal and grunted defiance at all strangers. It is a great mistake to suppose that the camel lacks intelligence. Treat him kindly and he is quite capable of developing into a very friendly and chummy companion. Treat him badly and he makes a note of it. There is a traditional story among the Aleppine camel drivers of a man who had been consistently brutal to one camel all the way from Alexandretta. When the party arrived at Aleppo and camped in the square, this particular camel-driver did not sleep in his usual place by the fire, but changed with another man. During the night the oppressed camel contrived to free itself from its fastenings, came noiselessly to the fire and crushed the life out of the man who slept in its driver's place.

After hearing this story, I parted from my own “cam-u-el” with great pleasure. His driver implored the blessing of Allah on me, and begged me not to stay more than three days in Aleppo unless I wished to get the Aleppo chibani (Aleppo button)—a horrible kind of ulcer, which eats holes in you and refuses to heal up for more than a year.

At twilight the magic of the East steals over Aleppo as the camel-drivers prostrate themselves on the bare ground and, regardless of the spectators, call upon Allah and the Prophet of God. If we had the moral courage to perform our devotions in a London street, the police would "run us in" for obstructing the traffic.

Of course, at Aleppo I heard a good many stories of the Arabs and their mares; but most of them (the stories, not the mares) were variants of the one told by Captain Marryat in "Monsieur Violet." A poor Shoshoné Indian owned a wonderful mare, which was coveted by an unscrupulous Mexican. One evening the Mexican lay down in some bushes and moaned. The Indian heard the Mexican's cries, dismounted from the coveted mare, and came to his aid. The Mexican begged for water, and the Indian dashed into a neighbouring thicket to procure it for him. As soon as the Indian was sufficiently distant, the Mexican vaulted upon the mare and shouted: "You fool of a Red-skin, not cunning enough for a Mexican; you refused my gold; now I have the mare for nothing."

"Pale-face," said the Indian, "for the sake of others I may not kill thee. Keep the mare since thou art dishonest enough to steal the only property of a poor man; keep her, but never say a word how thou camest by her lest hereafter a Shoshoné, having learnt distrust, should not hearken to the voice of grief and woe. Away with her, or in an evil hour the desire for vengeance may make a bad man of me."

The Mexican dismounted and put the bridle in the hand of the Shoshoné. "Brother, I have done wrong. Pardon me. From an Indian I learn virtue, and for the future, when I would commit any deed of injustice, I will think of thee."

After leaving Aleppo for Diabekir, we came upon an enormous stone lying by the roadside. This was its history:—

A young Turk, who lived in a village then a few miles distant, loved a maiden of Bohamia. Poverty on his part was an insurmountable obstacle to their union. Unknown

to her lover, the girl pined away and died. Annoyed by the young Turk's importunities, her father pointed to this stone at his (the lover's) doorway: "When you can carry that stone to Bohamia, you shall marry my daughter." "Allah will give me strength," replied the lover, lifting the enormous boulder with ease. As he neared Bohamia with his burden he met the body of the maiden being carried to its last resting-place, and fell dead on her bier. The villagers buried the faithful pair by the wayside and placed the stone over them.

The official receptions by local notabilities throughout Asia Minor were a great nuisance, for they generally lasted several hours. The ceremonial making of coffee, for instance, took a long time.

First, an old man came in with coffee berries on a frying-pan and roasted them over some charcoal in a brazier. When he burned a berry, he said things under his breath and threw it away, the others watching him with fervent interest, as if they had never seen coffee berries roasted before.

As soon as the berries were roasted, another old man appeared with a pestle and mortar and slowly pounded them, leaving off between whiles to smoke a cigarette and tell the others what hard work it was. When he had retired, covered with glory and cigarette ash, a third old man came in with two little copper pots, put some coffee in each, and retired with the air of one who had done great things.

A fourth old man—black as your hat—then entered with a vessel containing water, poured it over the coffee, and squatted down beside the brazier. As he put the two little pots on the glowing charcoal without upsetting them, the other old men with difficulty restrained their admiration. "In the name of Allah the All-Merciful, he's actually going to make that coffee boil," they said to one another in awestruck tones.

He did—at the end of three-quarters of an hour.

Yet another old man poured out the thick coffee into two little filigree cups and handed one to me and one to my host. I was about to drink mine, when the Dragoman

stopped me with frenzied eagerness. "You must wait till he tastes his."

"But he's waiting for me to begin."

"That's his politeness."

"Well, it's spoiling the coffee."

"Effendi, if you drink first, he will not ask you to dinner."

"All right. Tell him that although I have travelled a long way, I have never yet met a handsomer man, and I'll get a sip at it when he isn't looking."

But the Dragoman was firm, and I did not get a taste of my coffee until it was nearly cold, and had to sit there for another half hour, my host accompanying me to the door and endeavouring to kiss the hem of my riding jacket.

I had barely seated myself in my quarters, when the army of old men who had made the coffee appeared bearing the two filigree cups on a filigree tray. They were a present from my host, and each old man was entitled to bakshish for bringing them. Then I began to understand why so many of them had helped with the coffee-making.

The coffee-cups and tray were worth about a pound. The ceremonial bakshish amounted to double that sum. Then, when the old men had departed, my host came in state to return my call, and we did it all over again. This time, however, my Dragoman got most of the bakshish, although I had to give the cups.

At Diabekir I met a man whom I had often encountered during my solitary rides round Constantinople. For some reason Barnham had always glared at me with supercilious contempt, but we rapidly became friends, and he confided to me that the reason for his dislike was that I always wore immaculate white riding cords and "they got on his nerves." He was now vice-consul at Diabekir, and no one could have accused my cords of being white. Colonel Trotter, the Consul, had a trick of leaning over his horse's shoulder and the horse had a habit of throwing up its head. The result was that whenever we saw a bone in the road, Barnham wondered whether it was "another missing fragment of Trotter."

The winter had set in with unusual severity, and there was a famine in the land. One day my Turkish servant met me with the startling statement: "Effendi, if you will come with me to the khan, you can buy two or three nice little girls and boys for a medjidieh apiece."

"Why are these poor children for sale?"

"Come with me, Effendi, and I will show you."

I put on my fez and followed him. The snow fell steadily—a kind of dirty grey snow, which made the black walls of Diabekir look more miserable and gaol-like than before—and a chill wind pierced one's marrow.

We arrived at the caravanserai or khan, where travellers put up, cook their own food, if they have any, and lodge for the night. It was built in the form of a quadrangle with little open cells running round its four sides. The cells were full of the thinnest people it has ever been my sad fortune to meet. They did not clamour for alms or seek to excite one's pity, but simply shivered in their thin, cotton rags, and looked up at the falling snow as if it put the finishing stroke to their misfortunes. If it were the will of Allah that they should perish of hunger, all the talk in the world would not alter the fact. Should the "mad Englishman" buy a few of the children, he would have to feed them or lose the purchase money. So they thrust forward the brown-eyed little ones, who put up supplicating hands and chanted a prayer for food. The snow stopped as suddenly as it had begun, and a great burly American missionary strode into the caravanserai with two huge buckets of soup. He was followed by another man, an Armenian, who carried dozens of wooden bowls, which were always slipping from his hands and rolling into the muddy snow or being brought up against the bodies of kneeling camels. The children's big eyes grew bigger as they smelt the heartening smell of the savoury soup in the buckets. The American missionary beckoned to me to take one of the buckets, and motioned to our Dragoman to carry some of the bowls. The Dragoman got on his dignity and said he could not lower it by carrying bowls to beggars. "If you don't, I'll dip your head in the soup," I said fiercely,

and the Dragoman sullenly picked up some bowls. "Guess if you dip his head in, the children will have to lick his greasy curls," said the American missionary. "We can't afford to waste good soup like this. You take your bucket and go to the right, and I'll go to the left. You're to give a bowl of soup to each able-bodied person in each cell, and half a bowl to each child. When your bucket's empty—here's a piece of chalk—make a chalk-mark on the wall, and then refill the bucket at the cart outside. And be sure they don't rub out the chalk-mark while you're away. Some of these poor little heathens are mighty hungry, I reckon."

They were. Even in their half-dead condition, however, they had not lost their dignity, but quietly took the bowls of hot soup as I ladled them out and murmured a few graceful phrases. The little children did a thing heartbreaking to witness, for they tore off bits of their rags, wiped the outsides of the bowls where the precious soup had dribbled over, and sucked the rags, so as to get a mouthful or two more. For once in his life the Dragoman, like the tramp who swallowed a cup of yeast by mistake, had to work.

In an evil hour, before leaving Diabekir, I was persuaded to have a Turkish bath.

A brisk walk brought me to the bath—a large building paved with black and white tiles and lined with rabbit-hutches. In these rabbit-hutches were people who had emerged from the bath, and they all looked as if it had disagreed with them.

An attendant held towels before me while I undressed. Owing to the smallness of the mattress-lined rabbit-hutch, it was a difficult thing to do. Then I was swathed in towels, clogs stuck on my feet—infernal machines that slipped from under me—and struck the marble tiles with the back of my head. A simply-attired attendant—he wore a scanty towel—haled me into the first oven. Although I had shaved that morning, another man scraped me with a piece of an old barrel hoop which he imagined to be a razor. Another man cut my hair until there was about a sixteenth of an inch left on the top of my skull. By the aid of a cracked

mirror, he showed me in how short a time a naturally amiable countenance could be transformed into that of a brutal-looking convict. My head began to split before I left this first oven. I had been recommended to wear a wet towel round my head in order to prevent apoplexy. I wrapped a wet towel round my aching temples; the bath man rudely snatched it off and propelled me into oven number two, where the perspiration streamed down me. Then the attendant cast me into a third oven, wrapped a coarse glove round his palm, and scrubbed me until the dirt of travel rolled away in pellets. My skin seemed to have vanished. On the other side of the oven was a marble basin filled with hot water, and the bath fiend dashed the scalding liquid over me until my yell of uncontrollable anguish softened his stony heart and he cooled the water, produced a tub of soapsuds and lathered me into the semblance of a blancmange. After that, I nearly lost consciousness, but vaguely remember showers of warm water falling on me, the clogs fitting themselves to my feet, and the fiend of the towel, half-leading, half-carrying me to the rabbit-hutch. Here he wrapped me in fresh towels and I fell asleep. When I awoke an attendant brought me wishy-washy lemonade, muddy coffee, and a narghilé as strong as—I cannot find words expressive enough for the strength of that narghilé. The fiend of the towel demanded bakshish. I paid him in all six piastres (a piastre is two-pence farthing). Anyone who wants a similar amount of Oriental luxury should go to Diabekir. He will receive his money's worth—nay, more!

CHAPTER IV.

DOWN THE TIGRIS

WE left Diabekir without regret and prepared to descend the Tigris to Baghdad on kellaks. But first we had to manufacture our rafts after the primitive manner of the Romans when they invaded Asia Minor. The journeying on kellaks is rather exciting work, but this means of transport is generally adopted in the spring with the view of avoiding a long land journey rendered difficult owing to the scarcity of forage in the villages. Several kellaks were found necessary to accommodate our party. They were made of a framework of wood, supported generally on a hundred or a hundred and eighty inflated goatskins, and spread over with small branches and twigs. Little felt-covered huts were placed in the centre of the kellak, leaving a margin of two feet all round. Each kellak had one man to steer it in mid-stream.

The current whirled the kellak about in a very devious way, but my Palinurus viewed its gyrations with a tranquil indifference begotten of long experience. "We may go aground, but then we shall soon be afloat again, Effendi. Mashallah! it is the will of Allah!" Every half-hour the kellakjee poured water over the tops of the skins, and if any one of them chanced to leak filled it with air.

In the evening my friend T—— Bey (he and I shared a kellak between us) busied himself in fitting up our small hut—about eight feet by six. Our beds occupied the north and east sides; at the south was a little table where we dined and wrote; and on the west was the entrance. With the aid of a few tintacks and three or four rugs, he rigged up a very neat little apartment. A photograph or two served as a contrast to the numerous guns, swords, and revolvers suspended on all sides. The experiences of a first

night in a kellak are somewhat novel. True, we might have tried a village on the bank; but the recollection of discomforts endured in similar hamlets made us pause, so we decided to remain in our kellak. One by one the fires died out upon the banks. A wolf's long howl re-echoed mournfully through the air; the night birds skimmed the surface of the river with shrill cries. Later on the monotonous murmur of the kellakjees became hushed. Through a crack in the tent we could see the stars shining down and the moonlight playing on the water. A sharp frost had already covered the tents with rime and silvered the few scanty trees upon the bank. In the morning a stray sunbeam came dancing on T——'s nose, then alighted on my own, and in its vagrant fancy darted elsewhere. We had already started. After a hasty toilet (how cold the water was!) we sat down to breakfast on eggs frozen the night before and ham. "But you are a Moslem!" said I, watching the ham disappear down T——'s capacious throat. "I am very hungry," he rejoined, wistfully eyeing his empty plate, "and—yes, I think I'll take another slice."

Two days later we came to a narrow bend in the river, and found a hundred or two of predatory Coords taking careful aim at us with their rusty old matchlocks. The captain of the escort looked rather sad. "I can't go through the usual course of getting out of a difficulty," he explained to me, so he got on the top of the frail little hut and swore fiercely at the Coords until he went through it with a blood-curdling yell, and the Coords were so frightened that they scattered in all directions. "What is your usual way of getting out of a difficulty?" I asked the captain as soon as we had repaired damages and dusted him.

He explained: "When a Turk is in what you call 'a hole,' he first consults Allah as to the best way of getting out of it. If it pleases the All-Powerful to fail him, he goes to a relative. Should the relative be unable to help him, he then asks the aid of two friends. When they are unequal to the situation, he goes forth into the public streets and consults three strangers. If they cannot give him good

advice, he seeks the moon-faced wife of his bosom, his gazelle, his pet, listens to her counsel, and does—*exactly opposite to what she advises.*”

After a week's monotonous journeying, we received instructions from the Porte to go northward to Sivas and abandon our proposed visit to Baghdad. We were all tired of the Tigris, with its cave-dwellers on one side and flat bank on the other, and abandoned our rafts. The famine in the land necessitated our splitting up into small parties, and we joyously set out.

The paramount impression remaining on one's mind after having travelled in Armenia is that if you were to go over the same ground again to-morrow, there would always be the charm of the unexpected to which to look forward. I am speaking of the time before the country was devastated by the Coords. When an Englishman appeared upon the scene everyone—Turks, Coords, Armenians, Devil-Worshippers, and so on—got ready to help him. Having done everything (in theory) that was necessary, the Turk, Coord, Armenian, or Devil-Worshipper went back to his hut and considered it done in fact. There remains in my mind to this day the vivid annoyance which I experienced when, toward the end of a long ride, weary, travel-sore, hungry, I would pull up my apology for a mule and ask some stalwart mountaineer how far it was to our destination. He would blandly assure me that it was only an hour's journey, and depart. At the end of an hour there would not be what I once heard an exasperated missionary describe as “a scintilla of a village” in sight. Then came another man. “Oh, yes, Effendi, you'll get there in three-quarters of an hour.” Three-quarters of an hour later a downcast assemblage of men and animals would gaze over the plain in the fast-falling dusk, vainly looking for a village. After this had been repeated some half-dozen times, however, just as we were sorrowfully gathering up our reins in our chilled fingers and preparing to push on, with bitter hearts and empty stomachs, twenty or thirty rough-haired ferocious Coord dogs would emerge from the gloom, circle round us, and bite at our toes by way of

welcome. These dogs belonged to the Coords who had settled in villages, and were enormous brutes. They usually wore huge collars studded with nails, so that if a wolf flew at their throats he was received by a mouthful of sharp points and could not get a grip. I once bought a magnificent Coord dog for four shillings. He was so fierce that I dared not go near him. A rope was fastened to his collar and the other end given to a mounted Zaptieh. The last thing I saw of that dog was a frightened horse and Zaptieh disappearing in the distance, and the animal fetching a compass for his native village with what Artemus Ward once described as "a select assortment of trouser patterns" in his mouth.

One's troubles usually began at daybreak, when the muleteers were supposed to start. As a matter of fact, they were sound asleep, and had to be prodded until they got up. The Eastern mule is an adept in the art of puffing himself out so that the girth will presently slacken and the whole load come off. This generally happened when we were crossing a river. A constant source of astonishment to me was that, however kicked and knocked about tinned things might be, the tins never gave way. I have known a mule roll on a tin of herrings, and when we did succeed in getting the tin open for our evening meal the herrings, with the exception of looking a little thin, had nothing whatever the matter with them. Life is not very pleasant without tinned things if you are travelling through Armenia in the winter. There were no vegetables, and all one could expect to find *en route* was an occasional fowl or some goat's milk. I was once telling an old English lady how picturesque were the goats of that most historical town Angora. I pronounced the word native fashion with the short "O." "Young man," impressively said the old lady, "you may have travelled in foreign parts and think you know better, but you don't. I've called Angōra (with the long "O") cats Angōra cats all my life, and I'm not going to call them differently now because you've been to the place they originally came from, and think you know better than your elders."

The Asia Minor peasant, especially the gipsy, understands force only. No other argument makes any impression on him. A king's son, so the story goes, fell in love with a beautiful gipsy girl whose father refused to allow the Prince to marry her. Then the King vainly tried; so did the Queen. At last, a groom interviewed the old gipsy. "Son of a burnt mother, what is this?" he cried. "You have the insolence to refuse the King my master, when he could take the girl for nothing." With a thick stick, he gave the old gipsy an unmerciful thrashing. Whereupon the gipsy consented to his daughter's nuptials with the Prince. "Why didn't you consent at first, and so save yourself a thrashing?" asked the King. "May it please your Majesty," answered the gipsy, "your groom was the only person who asked me in a reasonable manner."

One should never travel in Armenia without ample supplies of potent insecticides. There is an insidious little insect (it is needless to give the name) which is almost invisible to the naked eye. It looks like a tiny black speck in a little hard skin of white. The unsophisticated traveller enters an Armenian hut, and the gracious host brings out the best carpet for the stranger to sit upon. The stranger sits. In the middle of the night, he experiences a maddening sensation, and there is no more sleep for him. As he rides along the next day, he is driven nearly frantic by this pertinacious insect and is compelled to seek a village barn in which to change his things. This happened to me more than once. By dint of unlimited bakshish I succeeded in getting a large cauldron of warm water put in a kind of barn, and hurriedly retired there to change my clothes. One of my companions let in a calf. By the time I had turned the calf out, my alleged friend had spread a report through the village that Englishmen had the whitest and loveliest skins in the whole world, and if the villagers wished to be convinced of the truth of this, they had only to peer through the door at me taking my bath. The curious inhabitants began to peer through the door as I serenely washed. The only way I could finish my bath

was to collect a heap of sticks and throw them violently in the direction of the door whenever it opened. Later on, I discovered that the seasoned traveller made a point of boiling his garments at every big stopping place. At first, I invariably gave mine away to my servant. It was only when he wanted to sell them back to me as new that I elicited the truth from him.

Europeans are pretty certain of getting fever and ague if they are not careful when travelling through Armenia. Quinine in constant doses is the best remedy. If you don't like the taste of it, put the powder in a cigarette paper and swallow paper and all. And if you should chance to become seriously ill, make a "bee-line" for the nearest American Mission station, where, in addition to the heartiest hospitality, you will find a medical missionary to look after you.

At Urfah, popularly supposed to be "Ur of the Chaldees," I went to a big pool to feed the carp, mossy-backed monsters of great age. From time immemorial, the Syrians have had a superstitious reverence for fish, and generally throughout the East they are esteemed sacred to this day. Nearer to the castle of Urfah is a smaller pool where the fish are not so big as those in the first pool. These pools were once fountains, whence arose the name of "Calirrhoe," given by the Greeks to Urfah—"the beautiful fountain." The far-famed pillars of Nimrod are two marble columns of about thirty feet in height with Corinthian capitals. Nimrod reigned from Baghdad to Cairo, and from Aleppo to Damascus. Uzza (Ibraheem was still unborn), the future father of Ibraheem, was Nimrod's Prime Minister—a wealthy man who carved idols to support himself, and as a means of acquiring political influence. One fateful day the royal astrologers tremblingly came to Nimrod:—"O King, live for ever; we fear the birth of a youth who shall do away with the idols which our Lord the King hath set up. He shall destroy them and thee and thine, and the star of Nimrod shall pale before that of this unknown boy." Nimrod thoughtfully beheaded the astrologers and decreed that all male children about to see

the light should be destroyed immediately after their birth. Uzza's wife was pregnant, and on Ibraheem's birth, concealed him in a cave near Urfah. A deer suckled the child once a day, and for twelve days he grew a year's growth every twenty-four hours. One midnight, Ibraheem's mother brought him to the mouth of the cave and pointed out a bright star. At the sight, the child experienced a wild yearning for

That light which somewhere shines
To lighten all men's darkness if they knew.

“ This is my God,” he exclaimed.

But the star vanished! The moon rose and flooded the earth with light. “ Art thou the true God?” cried Ibraheem, prostrating himself in the moonlight. The moon waned, paled, and disappeared. The sun shone out upon the hilltops, the birds sang, and all Nature was glad. “ Surely,” said little Ibraheem, “ this is God?” And he worshipped until the air grew dusky. Then cried Ibraheem in the bitterness of his heart, “ Is there no God? Whither shall I seek Him?” And God heard Ibraheem's cry and sent his angels to comfort him. For three years he remained hidden in his mother's house. One day, his father Uzza discovered him, and loved the boy for his great beauty. But Ibraheem entered Uzza's workshop, and destroyed his idols. Uzza complained to Nimrod and the king, hoping that the priests might convince him of his wickedness, sent Ibraheem to live in a temple of the gods. When the populace left the town to sacrifice in the olive groves, Ibraheem alone remained. Taking an axe, he destroyed all the idols of the temple but one; and on this one mockingly hung the axe. The young iconoclast was brought before Nimrod, and exclaimed:—“ O king, there is the chief of the idols with the axe around his neck; if he did not himself commit this sacrilege let him declare who is the guilty one!” Nimrod waxed wrath and constructed an immense furnace at the foot of the high cliff where now stands the Castle of Urfah. It was so hot that no one could approach it; so Nimrod ordered two pillars to be

built, pillars which remain to this day. A chain was suspended from these pillars, and Ibraheem flung into the furnace by means of the chains. The furnace first changed to a bed of roses, and then two springs of water welled forth at the indentations made by his knees. Ibraheem solemnly cursed Nimrod, who for forty years was tormented by flies and mosquitoes. In despair, he had a brass case made into which he crept for shelter from these merciless tormentors. One fly entered the cage with him and bit his knee. When Nimrod lifted his hand to kill the fly, it flew up his nose and ate its way into the king's brain. To lessen his torment, Nimrod ordered his slaves to beat him on the head with felt-covered hammers until he died.

We occasionally put up for the night with some very affable Yescedees, or Devil-Worshippers. The symbol which they worship is Melek Taoos—King Peacock. The origin of this pavonian adoration is that when Christ was on the Cross, the Devil, disguised as a Dervish, took Him down and carried Him to Heaven. The Marys came and saw that our Lord was not there and enquired of the Dervish what had become of Him. They would not believe his answer; but promised to do so if the Dervish would take the pieces of a cooked fowl which he was eating and bring it back to life. The Dervish agreed, and as he brought back bone to bone, the cock appeared and crew. The Devil then announced his real character and the Marys expressed their astonishment by a burst of adoration, and having informed them that he would appear to his beloved in the shape of a beautiful fowl, the Devil departed. The theory of the Yescedees appears to be that the modern Devil, embodying as he does every form of evil, combines in his character attributes which, in former days, were once divided among many. He is made accountable for all manner of wickedness in the material world which was formerly the business of demons; and he is also endowed with powers almost amounting to omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence, which betray his angelic and even godlike character. This god, whom they worship, is not only invested with the temporary monarchy of the

world, but is to a great extent looked upon as wielding an undisputed sway over hell and death.

The captain of our escort (he spoke English perfectly) was very fond of picking up the legends of each district as we went along. I remember one about an aqueduct near Amasia, the ruins of which were very impressive. The daughter of one of the kings of Amasia was accustomed to picnic a few miles outside the town, in a little dell from the centre of which gushed a spring so sparkling that she fell in love with her own face reflected in its waters, and vowed to marry any man who would bring this spring to Amasia so that she might have it near her always. A peasant became so enamoured of her beauty that, though too poor to obtain help, he at once began to cut an aqueduct from the spring to Amasia. After hewing at the solid rock for ninety years (they were a long-lived race in those days) it occurred to the peasant that he would go down to the town and acquaint the wilful fair one with the progress he had made. The rusty hinges of the palace gate no longer upheld it, and on the threshold he tumbled over the seneschal's skeleton. Ruin and desolation were all around; rank grasses grew between the crevices of the stained marble pavement. He pushed open one weather-beaten door after another until he entered the Princess's room. And there upon her mouldering couch, lay a heap of yellow bones and a grinning fleshless skull!

If you doubt the truth of this story, all you have to do is to go to Amasia, and there you will see the—aqueduct!

There were many tombs by the wayside, most of them very old. It is an impressive sight to see a Mahommedan light down from his horse by one of these wayside graves and pray for the welfare of someone of whom he has never even heard. His devotion is so unaffected, so full of a grave dignity and majesty of bearing, his indifference to the outer world so sublime, that he appears to be in the very presence of the God before whom he prostrates himself. There is nothing pharisaical in this publicity; it simply arises from the Turk's absolute unconsciousness that there can be any impropriety in openly worshipping his

Creator before all men. On the decks of steamers, in shady nooks by some wayside stream, or even in a niche in the crowded Grand 'Rue de Pera dozens of Turks may be seen praying in public at the times appointed by the Prophet.

One evening, just after dinner unfortunately, as we neared Kharpoot, where the American Missionaries have a College, I received an invitation to an Armenian wedding, and the dragoman explained that it would be a gross breach of etiquette if I did not eat everything that was set before me. In a lofty room were seated ninety men and boys of all ages, who rose at my important entrance, for on these occasions an air of being somebody is indispensable. The Orientals have no notion that it can pay to respect a man who does not respect himself, and therefore if a Pasha of *two* tails does you the honour of a visit, you must demean yourself as if you were a Pasha of *three*. A one-eyed gentleman in a blue dressing-gown assured me that it was the proudest day of his life to welcome such a distinguished guest beneath his humble roof. As a window was opened and the smoke cleared away, I saluted ninety times, and in doing so made two hundred and seventy movements of the right arm. Shriller and shriller rang out the flageolets in the courtyard, and a thrill of excitement lit up the passive countenances of the spectators. "What are they going to do?" I asked. "Where's the bridegroom?" "Effendi, they are going to *dress* him. By Allah, he cometh!"

At last a brawny barber bustled in, his arms bared to the elbow; but still no bridegroom. His assistant carried a chair, over which was spread a flowered towel, and a procession entered, foremost among which appeared the bridegroom, his countenance of ashen pallor, and his tottering footsteps supported by his friends.

After he had been shaved in public, a variety of costly and wonderful costumes were put upon him, all of them the gifts of his future spouse. Fourteen of the bridegroom's brothers, each holding a candle in his right hand, stripped him to the skin and then re clothed him in new undergar-

ments, three green silk waistcoats, a blue silk robe, sash, flowered white satin over it, two jackets over that, a long loose blue robe, and a new fez.

The bridegroom kissed my hands and seated himself on the divan. "You are very happy?" I asked.

He smiled.

"Then you love your bride very much?" "Very much indeed."

"What is her name?"

He thought for a moment but gave it up. "I have forgotten, Effendi."

In the courtyard, dancing was going on with great spirit around two huge bonfires; the women at one, the men at the other. A group of old women squatted on the house-tops. Six beautiful Armenian girls, carrying the bride's clothes on their heads, took their places at another fire. They were small, slight, with melting dark eyes, voluptuous forms, and tiny feet. Round and round they whirled, blazing with gold and silver coins, their tiny feet mounted on wooden clogs. Most of them wore blue muslin veils, strings of pearls in their long braided tresses, and heavy gold bangles on wrists and ankles. Near the dancers, a third group of old women uttered at intervals a peculiar shrill cry, thereby invoking all good influences upon the happy pair. The next evening, the bride, surrounded by her friends, goes to the church door on horseback, but the bridegroom must walk. On their arrival, the priest comes to the entrance, and explains to the bride her duties as a wife. Then they march slowly round the church, preceded by players on bells and cymbals. On reaching the altar, their foreheads are placed in juxtaposition, and their heads tied together by gold chains. The bride will not be allowed to unveil for three days. When that period has elapsed, she and her husband will remain alone together for the first time. One custom which has much to commend it, is that after the ceremony the bride is not allowed to speak for thirty days!

And in addition to my dinner, I had to swallow a supper which nearly suffocated me.

CHAPTER V.

AT KHARPOOT

AT Kharpoot (it is a sort of halfway house between Baghdad and Ismid, and a position of great military importance), after a laborious climb up the mountain, I received a hearty welcome from the American Missionaries. My chief was going on to Erzeroum, and, as the Commission's labours were virtually over, he gave me a three months' holiday. Some missionaries were setting out for Constantinople viâ Samsoun, and I decided to accompany them.

The day after my arrival at Kharpoot happened to be Sunday, and I reluctantly arose from the unwonted comfort of a sheeted bed in time for breakfast. The Mission services were conducted in Armenian, and many of the congregation still preserved the old Eastern habit of leaving their shoes outside the door of the Mission. My host and hostess made the day pass very pleasantly. It may seem a little thing, but one which I recall most vividly to mind was that we had potatoes in their skins (I am afraid to say how much they weighed) for dinner. The missionaries introduced potatoes into Armenia, and the people all round the Kharpoot plain took to them very kindly.

This supposed site of the Garden of Eden is indeed the most fertile part of Armenia. The missionaries settled there have a holiday every ten years, and go back to America for a year; but one old missionary told me that he had not been home for twenty years. He suffered so much from sea-sickness that it was impossible for him to

make the voyage. Another missionary's child was buried in the little graveyard of the Mission. She also could not bear the thought of leaving, for it seemed to her as if the dead child would cry out over the waste of waters and entreat her to return. I shall ever look back to the American Mission stations in Asia Minor as oases in the desert of discomforts and illness which fasten upon the traveller from the beginning of his trip to the end. When I felt ague coming on, I got off my horse and lay on the ground, whilst my teeth chattered like castanets. After the cold fit of the ague was over, the hot one began, and it was not easy to sit one's horse, for the animal I bestrode constantly shied at the carcasses of his dead brethren by the roadside. But I soon acquired the habit of swallowing quinine wrapped up in cigarette papers in order to avoid the bitter taste of the drug, and the ague relaxed sufficiently to enable me to get on my horse again. Fodder was so scarce, that the animal's high-blown pride gave way; he grew as thin as a garden rake and could scarcely get along; but when we sighted the Mission buildings at Kharpoot his courage came back and he broke into a trot. A couple of days of missionary fare—he seemed to me to be eating all the time—made another creature of him, and when I rode him on the third day, he actually kicked out at a dog from sheer light-heartedness.

Sivas contains the only throne on which it was ever my privilege to sit. The two kings I have met in the course of my wanderings never considered it necessary to ask me to try theirs. It was the stone throne of the ancient Armenian kings when Armenia had kings, and the price for occupying it was a shilling a minute. The stone was not very warm, and after one minute's regal grandeur, I experienced that chilly isolation peculiar to monarchs, and cheerfully abdicated. I never could learn more than a few words of Armenian, particularly the numerals. Do you remember in *Lavengro* where he tries to teach "Isopel Berners" Armenian? "Lavengro" says:—

"We will now proceed to the numerals."

"What are numerals?" said "Belle."

318 More Memoirs—and Some Travels

“Numbers. I will say the Haikan numbers up to ten. There. have you heard them?”

“Yes.”

“Well, try and repeat them.”

“I only remember number one,” said “Belle,” “and that because it is me.”

“I will repeat them, and pay great attention. Now, try again.”

“Me, jergo, earache.”

“I neither said jergo nor earache. I said yergou and yerek. ‘Belle,’ I am afraid I shall have some difficulty with you as a scholar.”

“Lavengro” would have had a great deal more difficulty with me, for of all tongue-twisting languages, Armenian is the worst.

The scenery was extremely picturesque as we climbed the steep ascent south of the Chamlu Bel range, where the Atar Mountain, 8,556 feet, reared its lofty head. Each stunted bush and shrub put forth feeble spring leaves to the sunshine. Hundreds of linnets and hoopoes flew from underneath our feet. Presently we were winding higher and higher along the mountain track, and burst out upon a tableland carpeted with spring flowers. Three days later, we descended the mountain to Tocat, which is completely shut in by hills in every direction except toward the north, where there is a small opening. On the west is the castle hill, with its ruined towers outlined against the blue sky; to the east rises another lofty hill overlooking the town; and to the south-east a slight gorge opens out.

Tocat was almost invisible owing to the orchards, the trees of which were one mass of delicate blossoms, from crimson paling to a faint pink and pure white; the air was languid with the perfume of the purple lilac which grows everywhere. During the night we could not sleep owing to the music of the myriad nightingales which sang round Henry Martyn’s grave.

The next morning we visited Henry Martyn’s grave. This indefatigable missionary, whose iron will at last wore out his feeble frame, lies buried beneath the spreading foliage of the terraced orchard of the Mission. A nightingale sat upon a bending spray laden with blossoms which kissed the grass at every puff of wind, and mingled with

the trailing ivy all around. There was an air of peace and stillness at this lonely grave—lonely save for one small stone that marked the last resting-place of a little child—so far removed from the world—something ineffably mournful in those green cloisters where the long grass grew rankly and a few straggling bushes intruded upon the ill-kept sward. But as we moved slightly away, rays of light shone through the cool leaves and gilded the marble tomb; the little brown bird perched upon the quivering bough poured forth a strain of rapturous melody, then plumed itself, and, still singing as it went, flew upward.

Despite its beautiful orchards and flowers, the place is very unhealthy. As we passed out of the town we were accompanied by all the Protestants of the place. "Come again soon!" cried an old Armenian lady, perched astraddle on a donkey, with her knees touching her chin. "Come again soon; it does my liver good." "Yes it does our livers good," cried the others. "Come again soon!" And they trotted back to Tocat, the old lady leading the van as we made our way towards Samsoun.

The wife of the celebrated Arabic scholar and dictionary maker,* Dr. Percy Badger, with whom I had an old familiar acquaintance, was buried in the same orchard as Henry Martyn. Thinking it would please Dr. Badger, I gathered a spray of flowers from her grave, and when I returned to London he asked me to lunch with him. There was a lady sitting in one corner of the room as I made a nice little speech and presented Dr. Badger with the flowers. "Thank you," he said absently. "Thank you." Then he turned to the lady in the corner. "My dear, flowers from my

* There was once the Chicago editor of a theological dictionary who entrusted the article on the Ark to a brilliant though erratic genius, who at the last moment sent in copy that could not possibly be published in an orthodox work. So, by a happy inspiration, after "Ark" he put—"See Deluge." When the work was ready for Deluge he was again disappointed, and had to say "See Flood," and when the Flood came, he said "See Noah." And then the Sheriff intervened.

first wife's grave. I don't think you know Mr. Burgin? ”
I did not stop to lunch.

* * * * * *

“ We have been constantly reminded of you,” said a Pera friend, the day after my arrival in Constantinople, “ for your landlord has been wearing your frock coat and pot hat every afternoon in the Grand Rue. Now, you'd better rescue them and go back to England to get rid of your ague.”

I went, but, like the “ new poor,” the ague is always with me.

PART IV.—IN HOLLAND AND BELGIUM

MY friend Dr. J. Morgan de Groot, the well-known author of "The Affair on the Bridge," "The Flower of Sleep," etc., was greatly concerned because he thought that I had "a hollow, graveyard cough and hectic flush." "Come with me to one of my farms in Holland," said he, "and we'll soon do away with all that." De Groot, although a Hollander, spends most of his time in England and writes his books in English. Every year he goes off to his farms midway between Utrecht and Rotterdam, and, sitting in seigniorial state, receives tribute from his tenants. The spectacle of an *author*, apart from my affection for him, ever having anyone pay him anything, had always appealed to my imagination, and I thankfully accepted De Groot's invitation on the condition that he told me how he first began to write.

"Well," said he, "it was in this way: A surgeon once performed a tricky and painful operation on me. I asked him how he had the courage to do it, and he answered, 'At the hospital I saw one *mug* performing this operation on another and said to myself—I can do that.'

"When I grew older, I saw *mugs* reading other *mugs'* writings, and, thinking of the surgeon, I said to myself, 'Why shouldn't I be the writing *mug*?' "

"Thanks," said I. "Though I don't take this very seriously, I'll get ready as fast as I can." But the getting ready was not so simple as it looked at first sight, for the astute Hollander is very careful whom he admits into his delightful little country. There were a good many preliminary difficulties about having my passport viséd at the

Dutch Consulate in London, and I had to take my place in a long queue and possess my soul in patience, nervously wondering the while whether I really resembled the villainous little photograph on that important document. After I had waited for a couple of hours and it was my turn to interview the great man, he poked his head out of his room and said that he was going to lunch and recommended me to do the same.

But when I at last "cornered" him, I flew to Fenchurch Street, and at Tilbury began all over again before I was "tugged off" to the Batavier boat for Rotterdam. At eight o'clock the dinner bell rang and I made a timid meal, for the wind was getting up instead of going to bed and I was afraid of being sea-sick. Then came bed, with three other men in my cabin, two of whom wanted the light kept on all night, and the third persistently turned it out.

I slept a troubled sleep and wished myself home again until I woke the next morning and, after a hearty breakfast, approached Rotterdam. Then the charm began to work, for I was in an unknown land, the land of the real Dutchman, not that of the light opera one.

De Groot appeared with his motor, and we sped away through the beautiful outskirts of Rotterdam, each canal-bordered street with its gaily-painted houses and lovely little gardens bringing one back to stageland. But once on the top of the dyke road, with a fresh breeze blowing from the river Lek, with the black and white cows (if by any chance in Holland a calf is born red and white, they paint him the orthodox colour) peacefully grazing in the sunk meadows and the windmills whirling round for my especial benefit, my jaded nerves began to recover, for the river is beautiful, there are plenty of trees, the farmers wear wooden sabots, their womenfolk pass by with a cheery greeting and note your admiring glances at their wonderful head-gear. When De Groot suggested lunch and handed me a huge meat sandwich and a bottle of beer, I knew that fate was doing her best to rid me of that "hectic flush."

In two hours we reached a beautiful old farm through an iron gateway with time-dimmed armorial bearings. The

house itself was more than three hundred years old and kept with exquisite neatness. The farmer lived in one half, De Groot and his wife occasionally dwelt in the second half, and during the winter the black and white cows took possession of the rest of the premises.

We had our meals in the open air, and were surrounded by half-a-dozen little white ducks who squatted between my legs and tweaked my trousers when they wanted crumbs; and they generally wanted crumbs. Directly the bell rang for a meal, they rushed up from the moat and sat round with their bills open.

The following morning, whilst lazily wondering what came next, the "handy man," Airie, entered with a tin box full of wriggling worms and asked whether I would like to go fishing in the ditches, where there was a big "snouk" (pike) waiting to be caught. According to Airie, all I had to do was to drop a worm in front of the pike and drag him out in triumph.

It sounded attractively simple, so I went out to interview the "snouk" in his watery lair among the rushes. When I saw him, he looked at least a yard-and-a-half long, and I was sorry I had not a worm to match him. But he took a dislike to me and contemptuously rejected the proffered contribution. "Not quite suitable," he implied. "I know that worm."

A fierce bellow a couple of yards away startled the "snouk" and he disappeared at the rate of fifty miles an hour. A huge black and white bull on the other bank seemed annoyed about something so I made for the farm in a hurry and the bull kept step with me, saying in unmistakable bovine language what he thought of me both as a man and a novelist.

"Oh, it's only his play," De Groot reassured me. "Now the farm stallion's got loose and he really is a bit dangerous. Like to come and help catch him?"

And I had thought a Dutch farm a quiet, restful place in a quiet, restful country. It reminded me of the Irishman newly arrived in Canada in the depth of winter when a dog rushed at him. "Nice country, begorra," he said bitterly.

“ Oh, it’s a nice country where they untie the dogs and tie up the stones! ”

That evening, Airie appeared and, in broken English (some of it was so much broken that it was difficult to collect the pieces), explained he was so upset by the “ snouk’s ” unfriendly behaviour to a guest of the farm that he had gone down to the ditch and jerked him out—with a hayrake!

Opposite the house was a huge dyke some thirty or forty feet high. This dyke prevented the river Lek from bursting its bounds. At the end of a rough stone pier where picturesquely grew a water-rooted willow, lay the salmon fishers’ boats, manned by crews of sturdy men clad in high boots, nondescript trousers and blue blouses, the whole surmounted by black peaked caps. The fishermen rented from the Dutch Government the right to fish in the Lek, and sometimes when they made a good catch received as much as four guineas per man extra pay.

There were two shifts—day and night—and the nets were so made as to let the small fry through. This same paternal Dutch Government restricted the fishing to certain hours of the day and night in order that some salmon might have a sporting chance of escaping the nets. The first boat began to fish at sunset.

The two boats, each with a net (one net was allowed at a time), were ready at a given signal, and the crew of one boat lowered its net and let it float down stream. When the net was fully extended they rowed to its top in a curve and dragged it into the boat. At night, an empty barrel, carrying a strong light, was attached to the top of the net, and the fishermen sent out a mournful “ Oo-oo-oo-oo ” to warn the second boat that it was time to begin. Then the second boat let down its net and the first boat rowed to the pier in order to await its turn.

Curlews and herons and wild duck flew high over the fishermen’s heads, the ducks going at the rate of an express train, the curlews occasionally flapping down to run along the sandy shore, the herons with legs outstretched behind them slowly waving their beautiful wings.

The wailing cry of the boatmen, the opaline mist enshrouding the little village of Ameida, over which the herons hovered, the fiery sky gradually fading into dusk, the soft murmur of the wind amid the reeds and the numberless black and white cows in the meadows—all these united into one restful and harmonious whole.

At intervals through the long night came the mournful "Oo-oo-oo-oo!" of the fishermen, the beacon lights marking the Lek channel twinkled and reappeared every two seconds, the soft winds whispered to the trees as the fishermen drew in their net and seized the beautiful salmon. At one time, between 1860-70, salmon were so plentiful in the Lek that the Dutch farm maids on making their annual agreements stipulated that they should not be required to eat fish more than once a week. They do not trouble about it now, although every week the authorities turn three million salmon fry into the river.

The average Englishman imagines a dyke to be a narrow ditch, but in Holland it is the level high road on the top of an embankment which keeps the rivers from swamping the flat, fertile land. My seat was under a great elm at the top of the freshly-raked avenue leading up to the dyke from the quaint old rush-roofed farm below. When the farmer's daughter had nothing else to do, she raked the soft surface of the avenue with laborious care, picked up every fallen leaf and twig, and an hour afterward did it all over again.

From my seat I could see the broad river below with its brown-sailed barges and passenger boats zigzagging from shore to shore, or calling at Ameida, where a stork's straggling, untidy nest was perched in a huge cup on the church roof.

The cows were at least a quarter of a mile away from the milking pen and continued to graze until the farmer struck a tin pail with a thick stick. Then they remembered that they were each entitled to a linseed-oil cake before being milked, and began to walk slowly toward the pen. Their shuffle broke into a trot and they raced each other up to the farmer and rushed at his pail. Each cow received a

cake and pretended she was entitled to another until the farmer pushed her away.

The farmer, his wife and daughter and labourers milked the cows, first tying their hind legs (the cows' not the farmer's) with a thick rope. The soft hissing of the milk as it fell into the pails came pleasantly up to the top of the dyke. When a cow had been milked, she lay down and chewed the cud of contentment.

At dusk, the real life of the dyke began, for the pair of predatory little brown owls who inhabited a hole in the big elm swooped down with blood-curdling cries over the meadow in search of shrew mice and small birds. Starlings foraged among the withered grasses, and the swallows darted high above them.

As a rule, the Dutch farmer and his sons rise at four in the morning, and, with brief intervals, work until eight at night. They all dress alike, in wooden shoes which they slip off when they enter the house, blue cotton blouses, any kind of trousers, and tweed caps. After dusk, when the cheese-making is over, the daughters of Dutchland put on their finery (some of them have beautiful lace), mount their bicycles, and go round visiting. Everyone has a bicycle. Instead of being born with a gold spoon in his mouth, the Dutch baby finds a miniature bicycle awaiting him on the doorstep. The boys of fourteen or fifteen appear to prefer a little cart drawn by a couple of dogs. Not even that well-known canine expert, my friend Robert Leighton, could accurately describe all the different breeds comprised in one dog. Though these dogs generally wear a sore-footed, world-weary expression, it is deceptive, for they look forward to the good meal which is invariably given them when they are unharnessed. The more misanthropic among them, however, regard the sheep dogs, who do not draw carts, with a certain lofty contempt. These dogs, now known in England as "Alsatian hounds," are, in reality, German dogs, whose remote ancestresses contracted family alliances with wolves. All their movements are wolflike, and they seldom bark.

Belated barges gradually ceased to struggle against the

tide and moored themselves to the river bank. The wild ducks scurried homeward well out of range of the sportsmen in the reeds as the merry brown hares came leaping over the low-lying meadow. More girl-ridden bicycles glided slowly through the night. From Ameida sounded the "tinkle-tinkle-tinkle" of the church bell in close proximity to the beak-clattering storks. White mists wreathed themselves over the meadow as the last home-going labourer left "The world to darkness and to me," for it was nine o'clock, when all respectable Dutch farmers ought to be in bed and asleep. For once, I became respectable too, and slowly wended my way to De Groot's rush-roofed farmhouse, half hidden among embowering trees.

From Holland to Belgium the journey is very easy, and it is astonishing how completely so short a distance separates the diverse nationalities. "Homekeeping youths" (not that I am a youth unfortunately) "have ever homely wits." Just as I was getting ready to leave Holland, I had an opportunity of going to Belgium for a fortnight's "run round." Hitherto, I had fought shy of Belgium; no one seemed particularly interested in it; everyone was sick of everything relating to the war; and, to quote a Canadian friend's favourite method of expressing himself, I was a "bit dubersome" whether that gallant little country would possess any interest for me.

Of course I was utterly wrong, for the whole fortnight proved to be full of novel and interesting experiences. We were some twenty-five, journalists—a term which admitted of elastic interpretation in this instance—belonging to the British Branch of the International Association of Journalists, making a little tour for the purpose of seeing how Belgium was recovering from the effects of the war, and pledged to do our utmost to promote a better understanding between our allies and the English nation. Some of the Belgian refugees in England had not won golden opinions from us. A party of Ostend shrimpers were quartered at Warwick during the war and refused to work. "Our work," said the leader, "is to catch shrimps. Take us to any shrimps in the neighbourhood and we will catch

them for you. One cannot catch shrimps where there are no shrimps to catch." But as a Belgian official afterwards said to me, "If the situation had been reversed and the inhabitants of your slums had come to us, we should naturally have been a little upset."

We began with King Albert, who had graciously intimated his desire to have us all presented to him at eleven o'clock on the morning before his departure for England. The English Ambassador, Sir George Grahame, and Sir Harry Brittain, our chief, were to present us. We were to go in evening dress—in the morning. Most of us shrank from such unseemly garb at that hour of the day; it seemed so like putting on "side" as well as the costume dedicated to waiters. But our Ambassador said that if he went in a frock coat, we could also go in frock coats if we had any (most of us had had our frock coats converted into morning ones), so we hied to the Palace in morning costume and all Brussels turned out to see us start.

As I had once met a real live king in Italy, I knew the etiquette to be observed on these solemn occasions. Several of my companions, however, were undisguisedly nervous and longed for a book of etiquette. We found a French one but either it was not enlightening or the man who translated it was not sure of his French, for it began with, "When taking a walk, the lady will please walk inside the gentleman."

Gorgeous flunkeys in plush "britches" and red coats bowed down and ushered us into a magnificent Empire saloon. We were ranged in a row, two aides-de-camp took up their positions by the folding doors at the other end, the doors were flung open, someone shouted "Le Roi!" and the King of the Belgians, simply clad in khaki, entered, walked down the line, shook hands with each of us and extracted a promise from me to write a Belgian novel. He had a curious habit of twiddling his thumbs as he spoke, and his English was remarkably good. After a chat with Sir George Grahame, he gave us a comprehensive bow, walked slowly to the folding doors and disappeared. It was all over.

Then we hied us to the Hotel de Ville to lunch with the heroic burgomaster, Adolph Max. His eyes were those of a man who had suffered martyrdom and was still suffering; but he had a pleasant word and handshake for every one, gave the ladies of the party his autograph, and showed us over the magnificent rooms with their historic paintings and stately, timeworn furniture. We were photographed in the great courtyard after a lunch in which sweet champagne played a prominent part (Belgian hospitality is boundless), and then departed in haste for Malines to see Cardinal Mercier, another heroic figure of this little nation of heroes.

There was a secretary who "stage managed" us, and the Cardinal walked slowly into the somewhat sparsely furnished reception room, the walls and doors of which were still full of shell and bullet holes. In his scarlet robes, he strongly reminded me of the late Sir Henry Irving as Becket. But the expression was different. Here we had the face of a tall, sweet, benignant saint, the gentle courtesy of a man who looked upon everyone as his friend and neighbour. Though his time is usually occupied in ministering to the poor and needy, he gave us a couple of hours, and delivered a beautiful little speech with a quaint, unconscious dignity which was infinitely charming. When we went down to the lovely old garden, he apologised for the drought which afflicted the flowers, his one great pleasure, and parted from each of us, after he had smilingly consented to be photographed in our midst, with the expression of a hope that we should enjoy the Carillon concert which was to follow after dinner. Somehow, the world seemed happier and purer after one's contact with the Cardinal's sweet and engaging personality.

A few days later it was my good fortune to meet Colonel Naissons, the man who held the last fort at Liège and thus delayed the German advance for eleven days and saved us all. I shall never forget that awful fort when he took us over it. He had five hundred and thirty-three men. Three hundred were killed and, just before the final assault from the whole artillery of the Germans, he told his men that if

they stayed they would all die, that they might escape while there was yet time, and that he would remain alone.

Not a man deserted him. After the final carnage when the Germans entered the fort, Colonel Naissons and his adjutant, both seriously wounded, were pulled out from a mass of dead men, and the Germans deliberated as to whether they would shoot him for delaying their advance on Brussels. He told us the story in simple, unpretending fashion, and concluded: "The wounded who survived are still in Liège. My wife and I have no children so we devote the rest of our lives to them, they are our children; they come to us and we go to them. When I die, my brave comrade (the adjutant) and myself will be buried in the fort over the bodies of our dead comrades."

Everywhere in the devastated areas the people were as busy as bees, rebuilding and repairing the awful ravages of the war. They were anxious for us to go and see them, to understand them, to know them better. Everywhere, they came to us with words of gratitude on their lips for all that we had done for them, and made no allusion to all that they had done for us. I felt ashamed that we knew so little of this still beautiful country, of its wonderful people, and when I saw Ypres—

But no. Tongue or pen cannot adequately describe the awfulness of those scenes, the wanton devastation, the blood-curdling cruelty, the tall, bare, blackened trees (where any trees were left) marring the bright sunshine, the derelict tanks, the ground still littered with helmets, barbed wire, thousands of bombs. Everywhere crowds of workmen were filling up the trenches and shell holes and risking their lives in ploughing little fields where still lay hidden shells. And all around were English, French, Canadian, Australian, American, Belgian graves, in which lay the mangled bodies of 200,000 men who had died for us and for honour, men who had saved the world and their own souls by this awful sacrifice. Perhaps the most heart-rending thing of all was to find on every fourth or fifth cross which marked these heroes' graves, the two words:—

"Unknown Soldier."

At every big town we came to, the first thing was an official reception at the Hotel de Ville, otherwise Town Hall, by the Burgomaster. The Burgomaster always took his stand, generally in evening dress at nine in the morning, at one end of a lofty hall, rich with antique oak and paintings of civic worthies. We stood in two rows, one on each side of him, and the Burgomaster, unrolling a huge MS., proceeded to state what he thought of us in the most flowery and polite terms, couched in the inevitable language of *la belle France*. If one of our party had any confidence in his, or her, French, he, or she, was selected to reply in equally lengthy and ornate terms as to what we thought of our long-lost brother the Burgomaster. Then the customary tray of glasses filled with very good champagne appeared, and we drank enthusiastically to the Belgian nation. Of course, the Burgomaster had the glasses refilled and, in their turn, he and his councillors drank to the health of the English nation. This was rather trying when we had to do it four or five times a day; but we were so tired standing all the time that the champagne* acted as a pick-me-up.

All over Belgium people were restarting their businesses and trying to forget the future which they shrewdly surmise the indefatigable Hun will some day endeavour to prepare for them. In the squares and market places were many men and women clad in black; and whenever a widow appeared everyone saluted her.

Many of the Belgians I met asked me to stay with them and see Belgium for myself, wanted me to tell others what it was really like and get them to come and see it also.

What is it like?

A sweet, fertile, level country, with magnificent crops growing greenly over many a battlefield, a country of wonderful old cities filled with priceless art treasures, which the Hun did not steal because he thought he was going to

* During lunch at the Zeebrugge Hotel a friend noticed that the wine was dated 1911, and the manager explained how it had escaped the Germans: "We went up to the cemetery, dug a grave to a respected French officer, erected a stone with a proper inscription at the head, and—well, that's the wine you are drinking to-day."

remain there permanently, a country scarred, bruised and devastated by the inhuman brutes who so wickedly tried to possess it; yet a country full of promise for the future.

On one occasion I had an interesting chat with a sturdy Belgian peasant farmer precariously ploughing a narrow strip of battlefield at the imminent risk of being blow sky high by an unexploded bomb. "What will you, Mon-sier?" said he. "It is the fortune of war. From the beginning of things, the strong have always oppressed the weak and stolen from them when they have anything worth the stealing. Thanks to the good God, the Hun did not steal everything in our towns because he thought he was going to stay there. Now, for the country's sake, we are trying to cover up his footsteps." And the old man whistled to his venerable horses and continued to take risks "for his country's sake."

That is the universal spirit of activity among all classes of Belgians. They do not sit down and cry over spilt milk, for the reason that such a course serves only to weaken the milk. So they cut up their dead trees for firewood and plant fresh ones, rebuild their devastated homes, clear away the barbed wire, derelict tanks and hand grenades, and sow their seeds in the confident belief that, for a time, at any rate, they will reap their reward.

And the Belgians teach "patriotism" in their schools, not only for the sake of patriotism, but as a precaution against the future. There are numberless schools in and around Brussels, and every day forty or fifty little children of both sexes, with flowers in their tiny hands, take the tram out to the scene of the execution of the Belgian martyrs. The place where the "martyrs" were executed is occupied as a barracks. So many square yards of the exact spot are marked off with a marble curb and the surface covered with tiny fragments of glistening marble as if it were a real grave. The ground is enclosed by a fence, and a gay little flower-filled garden runs round the inside of the fence. A marble slab, laid flat on the ground, records the "martyrs'" names, including Edith Cavell's, and that of another heroine.

At a given signal, the gates of "the holy ground" are thrown open and the children walk reverently in, the girls depositing their bunches of simple flowers on the marble curb as they murmur a brief prayer for the souls of the departed, whilst the soldiers' band plays solemnly and hoarse shouts of command break upon the ear from the neighbouring drill ground. Then the children pass silently out of the enclosure to eat their frugal lunch under the shadow of the great barracks whilst their teachers explain to them the real meaning of their offering. They talk not of revenge, but of duty to one's country; not of hatred, but of pity for the wickedness which sought to destroy an unoffending nation. The little ones finish their lunch, form into twos, and, each with a fragment of marble from "the holy ground," walk silently away.

In the course of our wanderings (Clive Holland and Sir Harry Brittain were badly damaged by a motor car upsetting on Belgian soil with a view to their closer inspection of it) we wanted to go to Louvain, and when the University authorities and the Burgomaster heard of it, with characteristic hospitality they at once made elaborate preparations for our coming. The University authorities awaited us at the ruins of the world-renowned library, and we light-heartedly set out for it with the Burgomaster of Louvain at our head.

But as we walked through the town our light-heartedness suddenly faded away, for all around us were ruined buildings, great gaps on either side of the street where houses should have been but were not. We were suddenly brought face to face with grim realities—a widow waiting until the remains of her husband could be dug out of the ruins—a child of ten explaining "that is where mon père was killed," and so on. When we came to the ruins of one of the world's greatest libraries we felt ashamed of our former light-heartedness, for nothing remained but gaunt, bare, ruined, tottering walls kept standing by long poles stretched across from one side to the other. Then we hurried away to where "the Faculty" awaited us.

"The Principal," assisted by the remains of his staff,

welcomed us, and read a long speech in which he thanked England for all that she had done for Belgium. With characteristic Belgian modesty, he omitted to allude to all that Belgium had done for England and the rest of the world. Then, our "stage manager" said to me in a hurried whisper, "It's your turn to speak. Do it in French—if you can."

I could not trust my French.

"It does not signify," said the Principal smilingly. "Othello," "Upon this hint I spake." When I looked "We all understand English," and, in the language of upon his benignant countenance, it seemed no time for banalities, and I "gave sorrow words," poor words, but moved by genuine sympathy. The black angel of death had long hovered over them and hovered still, but through his sable pinions the sunlight streamed and the great University, so barbarously destroyed, would speedily be born again.

Then came the champagne trays, and the Principal informed us that the first stone of the new library would be laid at the end of July.

It is symbolical, for everywhere in Belgium "new stones" were being laid. "It is over; we are beginning again," said one official to me. "Louvain is but a symbol of all Belgium. We are rising from the ashes caused by an unprecedentedly bloody and barbarous war. Help us to rise. Come among us and see for yourselves, get your countrymen to come too. Tell them not to go to the battlefields or they will have no heart for their holidays. The children still are left to us, there are green fields and smiling nooks unspoiled by the Hun. The struggle will be hard, but we have learned from the war that nothing is impossible."

And so we got into our cars and went away still thinking of those bare and ruined walls, those earth pits which even yet had not given up their dead. It was the story of David and Goliath over again, with a difference. David received no hurt in his encounter with the giant; Belgium has received almost mortal wounds in her encounter with the Hun;

and, though for the time being the Hun is "scotched," Belgium knows only too well that, in spite of the League of Nations, he will one day seek his revenge.

There is a well-known little poem by Christophe Plantin which very pleasantly embodies the ideas of every Belgian as to the attitude to be adopted toward the future. The original is in French, and though the translation is rather rough, 'twill serve:—

To have a cheerful, bright, and airy dwelling-place,
With garden, lawns, and climbing flowers sweet;
Fresh fruits, good wine, few children; there to meet
A quiet, faithful wife whose love shines through her face.

To have no debt, no lawyer's feud; no love but one,
And not too much to do with one's relations.
Be just, and be content. Naught but vexations
Arise from toadying the great, when all is done.

Live well and wisely, and for grace petition;
Indulge devotion to its full fruition;
Subdue your passions—that's the best condition.

Your mind untrammelled and your heart in Faith;
While at your business give your prayers breath;
This is to rest at home and calmly wait for death.

And now, after our discursive wanderings together, Gentle Reader, farewell. As the dying French king said to his courtiers, "I trust that you will sometimes think of me when I am gone."

THE END.



PRINTED BY THE FIELD PRESS LTD., WINDSOR HOUSE,
BREAM'S BUILDINGS, LONDON, E.C. 4.

237965
L.E.
B 9565mo

Author Burgin, George Brown

Title More memoirs and some travels.

DATE _____

University of Toronto
Library

DO NOT
REMOVE
THE
CARD
FROM
THIS
POCKET

Acme Library Card Pocket
Under Pat. "Ref. Index File"
Made by LIBRARY BUREAU

